FOREIGN
BROADCAST
INFORMATION
SERVICE

Daily Report

Central Eurasia

ATTENTION!! **ATTENTION!!** **ATTENTION!!**

FBIS will phase out publication of most of its paper reports, including ALL Daily Reports and most FBIS Reports, by 31 December 1996.

See inside for information on how to access FBIS products and services electronically.

FBIS-SOV-96-024
Monday
February 1996

January 1996

Dear Customer:

Responding to our many customers' requests, NTIS will be offering FBIS publications electronically. Due to resource limitations, hardcopy production of FBIS publications will be phased out during 1996. We will notify our customers well in advance of the expiration date for each of our publications. Please see below regarding electronic access to products.

Our goal is to cease publication of all reports by 31 December 1996, except for S&T PERSPECTIVES, S&T CENTRAL EURASIA, S&T CHINA, S&T KOREA, S&T EUROPE, and S&T JAPAN. The S&T reports will continue to be published as hardcopy until the graphics they contain can be disseminated on-line.

FBIS products are offered electronically through the National Technical Information Service's (NTIS) "World News Connection" (WNC). This is a new on-line subscription service accessible through the World Wide Web. The Web address is http://wnc.fedworld.gov. Please see next page for a subscription form or call NTIS Fax Direct at 703-487-4140 and enter product code 8645 to receive more information.

World News Connection™

A Foreign News Alert Service from the U.S. Government

World News Connection - WNC1...**$ 21**
7 Day - Introductory Offer
Unlimited interactive searching
[no profiles]
Order number SUB-9856BDQ

World News Connection - WNC2...**$ 50**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[no profiles]
Order number PB95-985700BDQ

World News Connection - WNC3...**$ 75**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[1 profile]
Order number PB95-985800BDQ

World News Connection - WNC4...**$100**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[up to 5 profiles]
Order number PB95-985900BDQ
(Prices are subject to change)

User Name *(Please Print or Type)*	Internet E-mail Address *(Required)*	Order Number	Price
1)			
2)			

(Continue on a blank sheet if more space is required)

Deposit Account Number (for NTIS account customers only): ____________

Customer Master Number (if known): ____________ Date: ____________

Contact Name: ____________ Organization: ____________

Street Address: ____________ City: ____________ State: ____________ Zip: ____________

Province/Territory: ____________ Country: ____________

Foreign Postal Code: ____________

Internet E-mail Address (Organization contact person): ____________

Telephone Number: (   ) ____________ Fax Number: (   ) ____________

Credit Card Number: ____________

Credit Card Expiration Date: ____________

Card Type (Visa, Master Card, or American Express): ____________

Cardholder's Name (as printed on the credit card): ____________

Cardholder's Signature (required to validate all orders): ____________

(Please fax this form back to NTIS at **703-321-8547**. Fax service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To verify receipt of your fax, call (703) 487-4679 between 7:00am - 5:00pm, Monday - Friday, Eastern Time.)

Daily Report
Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-96-024 CONTENTS *5 February 1996*

NOTICE: An * indicates material not previously disseminated in electronic form.

CHECHEN AFFAIRS

Terrorist Activity

Russia: Federal Forces Deploy Armor at Site of Groznyy Rally *[ITAR-TASS]* 1
Russia: Troop Commander: Groznyy Rally 'Carefully Planned' *[ITAR-TASS]* 1
Russia: Islamic Flags Raised Over Chechen Presidential Palace *[ITAR-TASS]* 1
Russia: Groznyy Rally Ended; Some Chechens Remain *[Moscow Radio]* 1
Russia: Chechens Insist on 'All for All' Hostage Release *[Moscow Radio]* 1
Russia: Dudayevites Refuse To Exchange Builders for Chechens *[ITAR-TASS]* 2
Russia: Duma Delegation Arrives in Chechnya *[Moscow Radio]* 2
Russia: Yeltsin's Aide Meets Chechen Leader in Groznyy *[INTERFAX]* 2
Russia: Working Group Starts Search for Missing Servicemen *[INTERFAX]* 2
Russia: Chechen Muslim Leader Offers To Take Priests' Place *[Moscow Radio]* 3

Military Activity

Russia: Troops Agree To Withdraw From District in Chechnya *[Moscow 2x2 TV]* 3
Russia: Zavgayev, Local Leaders Discuss Troop Pullout *[INTERFAX]* 3
Russia: Zavgayev: Some Troops May Withdraw in 2-3 Weeks *[ITAR-TASS]* 3
Russia: Commander Views 'About-Face' in Policy *[INTERFAX]* 3
Russia: Federal Officer Discusses Hostage-Taking in Chechnya *[Moscow NTV]* 4
Russia: 'Russian World' Program Condemns Chechen Rebels *[Moscow ORT]* 4
Russia: Torture 'Commonplace' in Chechen Concentration Camps *[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* 4
Russia: Per Diem Payments for Troops in Chechnya Decreed *[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA 31 Jan]* 5

Political Reaction

Russia: Yeltsin Thanks Residents of Pervomayskoye *[INTERFAX]* 5
Russia: Yeltsin Expected To Offer Chechen Peace Plan Soon *[INTERFAX]* 5
Russia: Premier Agrees 'in Principle' To Meet With Chechens *[TRUD 3 Feb]* 6
Russia: Democratic Choice's Gaydar Supports Chechen Peace *[INTERFAX]* 6
Russia: Borovoy To Head Duma Commission on Chechen POW's *[INTERFAX]* 7
Russia: Belyayev Reiterates Peaceful Stand on Chechen Issue *[Moscow NTV]* 7
Russia: Khasbulatov's Union Calls For Chechen Peace *[ITAR-TASS]* 7
Russia: Southern Cities Back Novgorod Chechen Initiative *[INTERFAX]* 8

INTERREGIONAL AFFAIRS

CIS: Primakov, Ukraine's Shmarov Sign Military Documents *[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA 2 Feb]* 9
CIS: Executive Secretariat Refuses To Accept Dniester Republic *[Moscow Radio]* 9

RUSSIA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Russia: Airborne Brigade Joins Military Operation in Bosnia *[INTERFAX]* 10
Russia: Grachev To Visit Troops in Bosnia 8-11 Feb *[Radio Rossii]* 10
Russia: TV on Release of French Pilots in Bosnia *[Moscow ORT]* 10

Russia: Kokoshin Calls NATO's Expansion 'Unacceptable' *[Moscow ORT]* 12
Russia: Army Paper Views Relations With U.S., CIS *[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA 3 Feb]* 12
Russia: Army Paper Interviews U.S. Ambassador Pickering *[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA 2 Feb]* 14
Russia: Deputy Premier Bolshakov Meets Abkhaz Leader *[INTERFAX]* 16
Russia, Ukraine Share 'Common Strategy' on Foreign Policy *[TRUD 3 Feb]* 17
Russia: Baltin To Turn Over Black Sea Fleet Command 5 Feb *[Moscow NTV]* 17
Russia: No Support Seen for Russian Separatists in Estonia *[INTERFAX]* 17
Russia: Yeltsin Approves Treaty With Iran on Legal Assistance *[ITAR-TASS]* 18
Russia: U.S. Fears Over Iran's Bushehr Powerplant Viewed *[Moscow International]* 18
Russia: Move Toward Restoring Economic Relations With Iraq *[ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* 19

RUSSIA NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin, Seleznev Discuss Duma Priorities *[INTERFAX]* 20
Russia: Seleznev Reports Yeltsin Comments on Strike, Chechnya *[Moscow NTV]* 20
Russia: Yeltsin Has 'No Doubt' About Election Timing *[ITAR-TASS]* 21
Russia: Poll Shows Yeltsin's Popularity Growing *[INTERFAX]* 21
Russia: Committee Set Up To Support Yeltsin Reelection *[Moscow RTV]* 22
Russia: Leftists Urged To Back Zyuganov's Candidacy *[INTERFAX]* 22
Russia: Grachev Bans Military Election Propaganda *[ITAR-TASS]* 22
Russia: Yeltsin Says Control Office Work Not 'Satisfactory' *[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI 31 Jan]* 23
Russia: Chernomyrdin Affirms No Policy Changes *[Moscow NTV]* 26
Russia: Soskovets Heads Cabinet During Premier's Leave *[INTERFAX]* 26
Russia: Primakov May Reshuffle Foreign Ministry Personnel *[INTERFAX]* 27
Russia: First Deputy Foreign Minister Appointed *[ITAR-TASS]* 27
Russia: President's Staff, Ambassador Appointments *[ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA 2 Feb]* 27
Russia: Miners' Leaders Discuss Strike Situation *[Moscow NTV]* 28
Russia: Decree Reforming Coal Industry 'Prepared' *[ITAR-TASS]* 29
Russia: Premier Signs Timetable To Fund Coal Industry *[Radio Rossii]* 29
Russia: Trade Union Calls Off Coal Miners Strike *[ITAR-TASS]* 30
Russia: Ex-Yeltsin Aide Views Life Inside Kremlin *[Moscow NTV]* 30
Russia: New Duma Deputy Speaker Interviewed *[IZVESTIYA 31 Jan]* 31
Russia: Zyuganov Seen Trying To Calm Western Investors *[SEGODNYA 3 Feb]* 35
Russia: Lebed Interviewed on Politics, Chechnya *[Moscow NTV]* 36
Russia: Democratic Union Against Reopening Leader's File *[INTERFAX]* 38
Russia: Finance Ministry Approves Issue of Bonds *[ITAR-TASS]* 38

Military Issues

Russia: Units To Reinforce Tajik-Afghan Border Troops *[ITAR-TASS]* 38
Russia: Suchkov To Fill In as Acting BSF Chief *[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* 39
Russia: Discrepancy in Baltin Dismissal Reports Viewed *[PRAVDA 3 Feb]* 39
Russia: Kolesnikov Defends Transfer of Airborne Troops *[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI 3 Feb]* 39
Russia: Lack of Funds May Cripple Land Forces *[ITAR-TASS]* 40

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Committee Plans To Examine START II Treaty *[INTERFAX]* 40
Russia: Duma Statements, Appeals Reported *[ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* 41
Russia: New Minimum Wage Law Seen Fueling Inflation *[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI 3 Feb]* 42
Russia: Duma Questions Fairness of Loans-for-Shares Auctions *[SEGODNYA 3 Feb]* 42
Russia: Duma Decree on Election Law Violation Reported *[KOMMERSANT-DAILY 3 Feb]* 43
Russia: State Duma Speaker Seleznev Interviewed *[Moscow Radio]* 43

Russia: New Duma Defense Committee Chief Interviewed *[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA 2 Feb]* 44
Russia: New Defense Industry Committee Head's Plans Viewed *[KURANTY 3 Feb]* 45
Russia: Communists Say No Talks With Government *[INTERFAX]* 46

Regional Affairs

Russia: Krasnodar: Law Enforcement Agents 'On High Alert' *[INTERFAX]* 46
Russia: Krasnodar Governor Bomb Threat on Chechnya *[SEVERNYY KAVKAZ Jan]* 46
Russia: Nemtsov To Back Yeltsin if Troops Withdraw From Chechnya *[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA 2 Feb]* 46
Russia: Tatar President Supports Yeltsin in Elections *[INTERFAX]* 47
Russia: Adygeya Leader Backs Campaign Against Chechen War *[INTERFAX]* 47
Russia: North Ossetia Takes Extra Security Measures *[ITAR-TASS]* 48
Russia: Ingush Refugees Should Be Settled Gradually *[ITAR-TASS]* 48
Russia: Vorkuta Miners Call Off Strike *[ITAR-TASS]* 48
Russia: Cherkess Group Opposes Sanctions Against Abkhazia *[Tbilisi Radio]* 48
Russia: Petersburg Poll, Seleznev on Change of Government *[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* 49
Russia: Ground Force Chief Arrives for Urals Inspection *[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA 2 Feb]* 49
Russia: New Series of Tu-204-200 Airliners Produced in Kazan *[ITAR-TASS]* 49
Russia: Tactical Missile Test Launched in Leningrad Region *[Moscow RTV]* 49

Economic Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Law on Banks, Banking Activity *[ITAR-TASS]* 50
Russia: Soskovets Urges Balance of Stabilization, Growth *[ITAR-TASS]* 50
Russia: Chubays Writes on Economic Reforms *[London FINANCIAL TIMES 5 Feb]* 50
Russia: Davydov Sees 'No Real Progress' With U.S. on Trade *[ITAR-TASS]* 52
Russia: Coal Miners Strike Potentially 'Disastrous' *[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA 2 Feb]* 52
Russia: Edict on Timely Wage Payments in Public Sector *[ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* .. 53
Russia: 'Critical Food Production Level' Reported *[ITAR-TASS]* 53

UKRAINE

International Affairs

Ukraine: Chinese Embassy Protests Expulsion of 3 Nationals *[INTERFAX]* 54
Ukraine: Media Spy Story Dismissed as 'Misunderstanding' *[INTERFAX]* 54
Ukraine: SBU Safeguarded Missile Design From Chinese Nationals *[INTERFAX]* 54
Ukraine: Moroz, Primakov Discuss Chernobyl Closure *[INTELNEWS]* 54
Ukraine: Moroz Proposes European Security Conference *[INTELNEWS]* 55
Ukraine: Shmarov Defends Russian Accords at Supreme Council *[UNIAN]* 55
Ukraine: Transfer of Black Sea Fleet Properties Confirmed *[INFOBANK]* 55
Ukraine: Kiev Lays Claim to 97 Properties in Russia *[INFOBANK]* 56
Ukraine: Bosnia Military Cooperation Agreement Signed With France *[UNIAR]* 56

National Affairs

Ukraine: Donetsk Miners Accuse Leadership of 'Genocide' *[UNIAR]* 56
Ukraine: 72 Coal Mines Continue Strike 5 Feb *[UNIAN]* 57
Ukraine: Kuchma Tours Chernigov Region, Meets With Farmers *[Kiev TV]* 57
Ukraine: Justice Minister Cautions Communist Party on Referendum *[Kiev TV]* 57
Ukraine: Moroz on Land Privatization Decree *[UNIAN]* 58
Ukraine: Parliament To Discuss Elimination of Missile Launchers *[INTERFAX]* 58
Ukraine: Kuchma Grants 'Broad Powers' to Crimean Envoy *[ITAR-TASS]* 59
Ukraine: Franchuk Quits as Crimean Premier *[ITAR-TASS]* 59

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Moroz Says 1996 Budget Adoption 'Catastrophic' *[UNIAN]* 59

Ukraine: Agriculture Minister Views U.S. Credit *[URYADOVYY KURYER 30 Jan]* 59
Ukraine: Pynzekyk Calls For Continued Tight Monetary Policy *[INTELNEWS]* 60
Ukraine: Conglomerate To Help Finance Chernobyl Closure *[INTELNEWS]* 60

WESTERN REGION

Belarus

Belarus: Visiting Primakov on U.S. START II Ratification *[Minsk TV]* 62
Belarus: Sharetski-Primakov Hold 31 Jan Meeting *[Minsk TV]* 62
Belarus: Special Group To Consider Participation in UN Operations *[BELAPAN]* 62
Belarus: Lukashenka on Integration With Russia *[Moscow Radio]* 62

Moldova

Moldova: Dniester President Asks Yeltsin Help To Join CIS *[INTERFAX]* 66
Moldova: CIS Secretariat Fails To Admit Dniester to CIS *[INTERFAX]* 67
Moldova: Snegur Interviewed on Prospects for Settlement *[INTERFAX]* 67

CENTRAL ASIA

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Opposition Leaders Insist Ministers Resign *[ITAR-TASS]* 69
Tajikistan: Baturin Urges Peaceful Settlement of Crisis *[ITAR-TASS]* 70
Tajikistan: Tension Rises in Dushanbe as Opposing Forces Gather *[ITAR-TASS]* 71
Tajikistan: Parliament Discusses Situation in Kurgan-Tyube *[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA 3 Feb]* 71
Tajikistan: Russian Troops Placed on 'High Alert' *[ITAR-TASS]* 72
Tajikistan: Baturin, Military Chief Visit Russian Peacekeepers *[INTERFAX]* 72
Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Assures 'Everywhere Is Peaceful' *[Dushanbe Radio]* 72
Tajikistan: Government-Opposition Clashes Continue in Tavil-Dara *[Radio Rossii]* 72
Tajikistan: Opposition Leader Sends Letter to UN *[Voice of Free Tajikistan]* 72
Tajikistan: Clashes Reported Outside Capital; 'Unease' in Dushanbe *[Voice of Free Tajikistan]* 74
Tajikistan: President Amnesties Rebels Who Surrender Arms *[Moscow NTV]* 74
Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Blames 'External Forces' *[INTERFAX]* 74
Tajikistan: Compromise Between Government, Rebels *[ITAR-TASS]* 75
Tajikistan: Defense Minister Says Army Can Repulse Rebels *[ITAR-TASS]* 75
Tajikistan: President Issues Decrees Dismissing Officials *[Dushanbe Radio]* 76
Tajikistan: Interior Minister Claims Situation 'Under Control' *[INTERFAX]* 76

CAUCASUS

Armenia

Armenia: Karabakh 'President' Meets UN Official in New York *[ARAGIL ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN]* 77
Armenia: Karabakh 'Parliament Chairman' Meets Communist Leader *[SNARK]* 77

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Iranian Envoy Warns of U.S. 'Anti-Iran Propaganda' *[TURAN]* 77
Azerbaijan: Aliyev Cites Need for Strong Army *[ITAR-TASS]* 77

Georgia

Georgia: Nationalists Condemn Ratification of Russia-Georgia Treaty *[BGI]* 78

Georgia: Zhvania Says Georgia May Leave CIS Interparliamentary Assembly *[INTERFAX]* .. 78
Georgia: Zhvania Urges Russia To Stop 'Promoting Abkhaz Separatism' *[Tbilisi TV]* 78
Georgia: Pro-Georgian Abkhazians Warn Against Outside Inteference *[CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY]* 79
Georgia: Abkhazia Protests Interference in 'Internal Affairs' *[INTERFAX]* 79
Georgia: Abkhaz Separatists Building Fortifications on Gali Canal *[IBERIA]* 79

BALTIC STATES

Latvia

Latvia: Russian Shift on NATO Expansion Noted *[Riga Radio]* 80

Lithuania

Lithuania: Ambassador Requests Consultations With NATO *[Vilnius Radio]* 80
Lithuania: Brazauskas Views Elections, Slezevicius *[INTERFAX]* 80

Terrorist Activity

Russia: Federal Forces Deploy Armor at Site of Groznyy Rally

LD0502131396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1300 GMT 5 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Translated Text] GROZNYY, 5 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Because of the deteriorating situation in the Chechen capital federal forces deployed armor outside the former presidential palace at around 1500. A pro-Dudayev rally has been going on outside the building.

Ruslan Tsakayev, secretary of Chechnya's Security Council, does not rule out the possibility of armed provocations against government establishments in the Chechen capital. If this happens, he told ITAR-TASS, "the government of the republic may seek assistance from the federal forces. A contingency plan has already been drafted."

Russia: Troop Commander: Groznyy Rally 'Carefully Planned'

LD0502104996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1009 GMT 5 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Boris Kipkeyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 5 Feb — Although the rally in central Groznyy, attended by thousands of people, is continuing for the second day, "there has been no serious rise in tension" in the Chechen republic. The square near the former presidential palace, where the rally is being held, "is being closely monitored on the ground and from the air," Major General Viktor Vlasenkov, head of the headquarters of the joint group of federal forces in Chechnya, told an ITAR-TASS correspondent on the telephone from Khankala.

Vlasenkov said no provocations against the servicemen have been reported. He believes the rally in Groznyy was carefully planned and did not occur spontaneously, "on the spur of the moment," as it were. A majority of the protestors are women or elderly people, however, "several armed men have also been spotted," the general said.

According to his estimate, the number of protestors in the centre of Groznyy does not exceed 2,500.

Russia: Islamic Flags Raised Over Chechen Presidential Palace

LD0402151696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1357 GMT 4 Jan 96

[By special correspondent Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 4 February (ITAR-TASS) — The green flags of Islam and the Republic of Ichkeria were raised in Groznyy today above the building of the former presidential palace which was destroyed. They were raised by the participants of a many-thousand-strong anti-Russian rally. The rally participants also hung-up the picture of Dzhokhar Dudayev, leader of the Chechen separatists, above the entrance to the palace.

The participants in the rally, which is organized by the opposition and started this morning near the presidential building, marched through the town center and returned to their starting point. Their main demand is that the federal forces should be withdrawn from Chechnya.

The rally is beginning to break up a little and many of its participants are departing.

Nevertheless, the participants in the rally broke an iron fence around the palace and a small group of people gathered near a roadblock located approximately 150 meters from the palace on the bank of the Sunzha river.

However, they have not committed and provocations so far.

Russia: Groznyy Rally Ended; Some Chechens Remain

LD0402164696 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1600 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Groznyy, the anti-Russian rally attended by thousands has ended. But hundreds of its participators have started lighting camp fires outside the former presidential palace and in the courtyards of nearby homes. They are preparing for night vigils. They are using not only firewood, but good, sawn timber meant for restoration work. About 700 people continue rallying in the ruined building of the presidential palace. Above the palace the green flags of Islam and Ichkeria are flying again.

Russia: Chechens Insist on 'All for All' Hostage Release

LD0402212696 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 2040 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aslan Maskhadov, the chief of staff of Dudayev's formations, and State Duma

Deputy Yuriy Shchekochikhin met in the village of Novogroznenskiy today to discuss the release of hostages. Shchekochikhin gave Maskhadov the latest list of the Russian POWs with 861 names on it. Aslan Maskhadov has told our correspondent Aleksandr Klimov that the fate of all the POWs should have been decided six months ago, on 30 June, when the military agreement was signed. The document envisaged that all POWs should be exchanged in accordance with the all-for-all principle. Maskhadov said that the Chechens are prepared to release the Novosibirsk militiamen captured in Pervomayskoye today, for example, but only on the conditions stated in the military agreement.

Russia: Dudayevites Refuse To Exchange Builders for Chechens

LD0402100596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0902 GMT 4 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sharip Asuyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 4 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Dudayev's side has refused to exchange the Stavropol builders who were taken hostage for Chechens being held by the federal authorities, and demanded that the Russian side admit being the initiator of hostage-taking. The ITAR-TASS correspondent was told this by Ilyas Agayev, head of the Achkhoy-Martan construction and restoration section.

Agayev said that he and another 30 builders from two Stavropol mobile mechanized columns had been working on the restoration of the school and hospital in the district center of Achkhoy-Martan and had been abducted by Dudayev supporters on 16 December. The following day they were joined by another 7 workers who had arrived in Chechnya from Penza. All were held underground in a mountainous locality. Agayev himself was released after having been detained for 10 days to hold talks with the authorities. He said that one of the Stavropol builders, 42-year old Semen Kozhukhov had died on 25 December. He now knows nothing about the condition of the other hostages.

Agayev said that at the insistence of the Dudayev side he had virtually come to an agreement with the federal side's representatives for the release from filtration centers of an equivalent number of detained Chechens, but the exchange did not happen.

Russia: Duma Delegation Arrives in Chechnya

LD0402062096 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 0300 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation from the Russian Duma has arrived in Chechnya to try to obtain the release of at least some of the prisoners being held by Dudayev's armed fighters. Head of the delegation Yuriy (Shchekotikhin) is counting on a meeting today with Aslan Maskhadov, head of the general staff of the Chechen detachments, in Novogroznenskiy.

Our special correspondent reports from Dagestan that there is unconfirmed information that the Chechens may keep members of the delegation as hostages.

Russia: Yeltsin's Aide Meets Chechen Leader in Groznyy

LD0202144596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin's legal aide Mikhail Krasnov met head of the Chechen Republic Doku Zavgayev in Groznyy Friday, well-informed sources told INTERFAX.

The meeting was held behind closed doors, and its agenda was not made public.

Sources do not exclude that Krasnov arrived to discuss Yeltsin's plan for a peaceful settlement in Chechnya with republican leaders.

Krasnov will return to Moscow Monday.

Russia: Working Group Starts Search for Missing Servicemen

LD0502124896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1123 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, Feb 5 (INTERFAX) — A temporary working group has started operations in the Chechen capital of Groznyy to locate servicemen listed as missing, and to secure the release of hostages in Chechnya, said Anatoliy Volkov, one of the chiefs of the commission.

The commission was set up by the Russian president's office to search for over 300 Russian prisoners of war, interned or listed as missing, and to secure the release of more than 80 people taken hostage by gunmen loyal to Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

The working group was formed at the commission on an instruction issued by Yeltsin on December 15th, 1995, and was made directly responsible for the situation in Chechnya. It is led by Col.-Gen. Valeriy Patrikeyev, who at one time was in charge of the Caucasian Military District and subsequently commanded allied peacekeeping troops in Tajikistan.

The 12-man group includes representatives of the Defense and Interior Ministries, and the Federal Border, Security, and Health Services. They will work in close contact with the state commission formed by the government of the Chechen Republic to search for those listed as missing.

The group plans talks with the militants. However, the terms set forth by rebels for the hostages release are not "centralized by nature", so group officials will have to examine each case separately, meeting militants at local level.

Russia: Chechen Muslim Leader Offers To Take Priests' Place

LD0402180596 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1600 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a talk to the ITAR-TASS correspondent today, Abdullakh Khadzhi Musayev, deputy mufti and member of the Supreme Council of Muslims of the Chechen Republic, expressed readiness to take the place of Archpriest Sergey and Father Anatoliy, taken hostage on 29 January. He said the Muslim clergy was taking every measure possible for the release of the Orthodox priests. Representatives of Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of the Dudayevite formations, say he is ready in the near future to hold a press conference in Novogroznenskiy on the fate of the hostages.

Military Activity

Russia: Troops Agree To Withdraw From District in Chechnya

LD0302120896 Moscow 2x2 Television in Russian 1100 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The RIA-NOVOSTI agency reports that the federal troops command in Chechnya and the Shatoy District administration of the Chechen Republic are expected to signed an agreement within in the next few days. Under the agreement, the district administration undertakes to ensure law and order on its territory while the federal troops command starts to withdraw its forces from Shatoy District.

Chechen Republic chief Doku Zavgayev also told journalists that federal troops will begin to withdraw from several Chechen districts in the next two to three weeks. Zavgayev stressed that two brigades of federal forces will remain on Chechen territory in any case, under the military agreement signed last summer.

Russia: Zavgayev, Local Leaders Discuss Troop Pullout

LD0302143896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — The pro-Moscow head of state of the Chechen republic, Doku Zavgayev, held a consultative conference with Checnya's local leaders Saturday afternoon in Groznyy. The conference focused on preparations for a federal troop pullout from Chechnya, sources close to the Chechen government told INTERFAX.

The conference fits in well with suggested troop pullout from Chechnya, the same sources said.

Doku Zavgayev suggested that federal troops leave a number of areas in Chechnya. Troop pullout, according to one of the government sources, may be part of a Moscow-Groznyy agreement on a special status for Chechnya. The Zavgayev government is verbalizing appropriate suggestions, the source said.

Russia: Zavgayev: Some Troops May Withdraw in 2-3 Weeks

LD0202141996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1305 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 2 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — The withdrawal of federal troops from some areas in Chechnya may begin as early as 2-3 weeks' time. Correspondents were told this today by Doku Zavgayev, the head of the republic.

He described the withdrawal of the troops from Chechnya as one of the government's main tasks, adding that "the troops will be withdrawn, since we are moving toward stabilization." Zavgayev stressed that "there is no war in Chechnya; there are just separate sorties by groups of people who are in conflict with the people of Chechnya."

Lieutenant General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, commander of the federal group in Chechnya, stated, for his part, that consultations were currently under way in a number of areas in the republic where the question of troop withdrawal was uppermost.

Russia: Commander Views 'About-Face' in Policy

LD0302143696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — New initiatives for a Chechen accommodation spell an about-face in the Russian policy for Chechnya, commander of the federal contingent in Chechnya Lieutenant-General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov told INTERFAX.

Federal emissaries and the Doku Zavgayev government are holding consultations in a bid to plan a stage-by-stage troop pullout from Chechnya, Tikhomirov said.

In Tikhomirov's view, it is too early to schedule a complete troop pullout.

Zavgayev said Friday that federal troops could leave some areas of the Chechen republic in a matter of two or three weeks. Federal troops will pull out of Chechnya which is coming closer to stabilization, Zavgayev said.

As soon as the federal troops have left Chechnya, the Zavgayev government and personally Doku Zavgayev will bear responsibility for social and political developments in the republic, Tikhomirov said.

Russia: Federal Officer Discusses Hostage-Taking in Chechnya

LD0402193996 Moscow NTV in Russian
1600 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The federal troops are not carrying out any major operations in Chechnya now. [passage omitted]

The hostage-taking by Chechens of soldiers, whom they later call POWs, is a source of greater annoyance. There is desperate trading for them. Recently this has become a very profitable business for the Chechens.

[Begin recording by Igor Rybakov, commander of group of interior troops in Chechnya, identified by caption] There are people who are connected with the bandits. They directly stalk only soldiers and officials, let's say they pick five or ten of them. Further, the soldiers are allocated, sold to villages. These people act as traders. When all the issues are settled or when they are no longer needed, intermediaries step in and they sell or exchange the hostages again. [end recording]

Russia: 'Russian World' Program Condemns Chechen Rebels

LD0402185996 Moscow Russian Public Television
First Channel Network in Russian
0955 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Summary] The 25-minute "Russian World" program shows the funeral of a Russian officer, Lieutenant Colonel Andrey Krestyaninov, who was killed during the operation to release hostages in the village of Pervomayskoye in Dagestan. He was commander of a special rapid reaction detachment of the Russian Interior Ministry's Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime.

The pathos of the program is in its sharp criticism of the current campaign in the media against the Russian army and its role in Chechnya. The program host says: "It is painful to think that the criminals who killed Andrey Krestyaninov are now posing as heroes in front of TV cameras, full of self-satisfaction. Meanwhile, it is already obvious that talks and cease-fire agreements did not stop the Chechen rebels from, yet again, seizing a maternity ward and a hospital, from killing and robbing innocent people. But in the end the Russian soldiers and officers were again somehow to blame: The Russian soldiers and officers whom the Dudayevites have been shooting with impunity for the last six months, to the accompaniment of the waffle about peace talks. Andrey and his comrades never hid from the bullets behind women and children. And as a result, they received not only the lethal lead and lumps of frozen clay, but also spits from the Moscow media. And, as before, those who would not balk at taking even little babies hostage, professional murderers like Shamil Basayev and Former Komsomol Leader Salman Raduyev, have ended up with glory and popularity."

Interior ministry video material showing pictures of the Pervomayskoye operation is used during the program.

Russia: Torture 'Commonplace' in Chechen Concentration Camps

MK0302130596 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA
in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Aleksandr Zhelenin: "Terror Is the Result of Russia's Actions. Witnesses Talk of Torture in Filtration Camps"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The press conference on the subject "Human Rights Violations and the Use of Torture in Filtration Camps of the Operational Staff Command Group in Chechnya," held Thursday [1 February] in Moscow, compels a new look at so-called "Chechen terrorism" and hostages. The system of filtration camps, according to Ikhvan Gerikhanov, chairman of Chechnya's Constitutional Court, emerged in the first days of the war. His statement, as well as the evidence presented by Ruslan Soslambekov, chairman of an interregional people's diplomacy movement, who spent nearly a month in one such camp as a prisoner, points to the conclusion that these concentration camps, along with carpet bombing, are one reason for hostage-taking acts such as those that occurred in Budennovsk and Kizlyar.

According to Soslambekov, whose group in particular deals with the problem of exchanging prisoners of war and which has already returned, under an agreement with the Dudayevites, 17 Russian military servicemen, there are rampant human rights violations in these filtration camps. Often people are seized and taken there for no apparent reason and have nothing to do with armed formations. Russian army servicemen seize civilians on streets, roads, and even in their own homes without making any formal charges. For several days, before getting to the camp, detainees usually do not receive any food and are subjected to constant beatings and torture. It is not unusual to find women and children among the captives in such camps. Many of them end up there when they bring parcels to their relatives, thus effectively becoming hostages themselves, because Russian military servicemen demand either prisoners or weapons in exchange for them. Extortion by servicemen in these camps is a common practice. According to Soslambekov, the minimum fee for releasing a person is 5 million rubles. The camps themselves are unheated barracks, which do not even have bunks. Captives have to sleep on the concrete floor. Torture and harassment are commonplace. Such forms of torture are practiced as hanging a person up by the hands or feet while stretching him (her); siccing police dogs [on people]; and beating them with rifle butts. People, tied hand and foot, are thrown into a hole in the ground, where they are kept without food and water for up to five days. Guards also enjoy a "joke" such as mock execution by firing squad. Actual executions are also not rare, as well as deaths resulting from the other aforementioned causes.

Russia: Per Diem Payments for Troops in Chechnya Decreed

MM0502115996 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 1

[Russian Federation Government Decree No. 61 "On the Payment of Field (Per Diem) Money to Servicemen and Internal Affairs Organs Personnel Carrying Out Missions in Conditions of the Armed Conflict on the Territory of the Chechen Republic and the Adjacent North Caucasus Region of the Russian Federation," signed by Russian Federation Government Chairman V. Chernomyrdin and dated 27 January 1996]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Federation Government decrees that:

1. Servicemen of military units, staffs, subunits, and operational and other groups who are stationed on the territory of the Chechen Republic and the adjacent North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation, carrying out missions in conditions of the armed conflict, and included in the lists mentioned in Paragraph 2 of this decree, as well as Internal Affairs organs servicemen and personnel who have been sent (on a temporary duty assignment) to these areas to carry out missions in armed conflict conditions, are to be paid field (per diem) money according to the norms prescribed for workers who have been sent to the Chechen Republic on a temporary duty assignment.

The lists of Russian Federation Armed Forces military units, staffs, subunits, and operational and other groups, and of subunits of the Internal Affairs organs and federal executive branch organs in which military service is envisaged, which are carrying out missions in conditions of the armed conflict on the territory of the Chechen Republic and the adjacent North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation, are to be approved by the leaders of the relevant federal executive branch organ.

3. The expenditure associated with the implementation of the measures envisaged by this decree is to be met from federal budget funds within the limits of the appropriations allocated to the federal executive branch organs in which military service is envisaged.

[Signed] Russian Federation Government Chairman V. Chernomyrdin

Political Reaction

Russia: Yeltsin Thanks Residents of Pervomayskoye

LD0302180496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1635 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MAKHACHKALA, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — President Yeltsin dismissed as ungrounded his earlier view of the Dagestani village of Pervomayskoye as a traditional stronghold of Chechen separatists and thanks the residents of Pervomayskoye for "remaining loyal to the Russian Constitution," chairman of the Dagestani State Council Magomedali Magomedov told the villagers Friday.

According to the press service of the Dagestani State Council and government, members of the government commission for the elimination of the aftereffects of the Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye developments and representatives of Dagestani ministries and government agencies accompanied Magomedov to Pervomayskoye.

Khasavyurt Governor Ibragim Beksultanov acquainted the government commission with blueprints for new housing construction in Pervomayskoye which suffered damages in the federal operation against Chechen separatists under Salman Raduyev.

Russia: Yeltsin Expected To Offer Chechen Peace Plan Soon

LD0202145796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin will offer his plan for resolving the Chechen crisis one of these days, State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev told journalists after his first private meeting with Yeltsin Friday.

"I understand that the plan will emphasize peaceful settlement," Seleznev said.

Seleznev was pleased with his first meeting with Yeltsin.

"I had the impression that somebody told the president something unfavorable about me and he seemed to expect something different from me. But what we had was a business-like conversation," he emphasized. Seleznev was nominated by the Communist Party for the Duma chairmanship.

According to Seleznev, Yeltsin told him about his telephone talk with U.S. President Bill Clinton and "expressed his strong belief that START-2 must be ratified."

Seleznev said that two or three parliamentary hearings will be held behind closed doors in the run up to the ratification of the treaty.

Seleznev said that Yeltsin asked him what was wrong with the presidential election headquarters if such a body is set up. "I replied that even if this is a non-governmental body, it is headed by First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets and that society rejects this," Seleznev explained.

Soskovets should take leave for the duration of the presidential race, Seleznev believes.

Seleznev said he had asked Yeltsin several questions, in particular about Admiral Eduard Baltin who has been relieved a few days ago from the command of the Black Sea Fleet.

Yeltsin told Seleznev that he pondered on that decision but signed a decree dismissing Baltin after the commanders of armed services asked him to do so.

"The president came to the conclusion that Baltin was not much good at his job but will not be dismissed from the armed forces," Seleznev continued.

Yeltsin told Seleznev that new approaches are possible to resolving the Black Sea Fleet issues "so that the problem would be solved in Russia's favor."

Russia: Premier Agrees 'in Principle' To Meet With Chechens

MM0202202296 Moscow TRUD in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Musa Muradov, editor of the GROZNENSKIY RABOCHIY newspaper: "Through Meeting With V. Chernomyrdin?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The organizing committee of the coalition council recently set up on the initiative of a "roundtable" of Chechen public movements and political parties has made an attempt to put a stop to the war. Ruslan Kutayev, a member of the organizing committee and chairman of the Chechen National Independence Party, told me that in a telephone conversation with a high-ranking Russian Government representative he had discussed the possibility of the council's representatives meeting with Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin. According to Kutayev, agreement was reached in principle. The Chechen side reckons that the meeting will be held in the first half of February.

The members of the organizing committee of the coalition council — which is a public organization — include representatives of official Groznyy as well as opposition leaders.

Russia: Democratic Choice's Gaydar Supports Chechen Peace

LD0302212496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1635 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — The Russia's Democratic Choice Party upholds Governor Nemtsov's call for the collection of signatures under a letter of protest against the war in Chechnya. One million signatures have been collected under a formal letter of protest in Nemtsov's home Nizhniy Novgorod Region.

Nemtsov's initiative can influence the course of developments now, the Choice's chairman Yegor Gaydar said before signing the letter of protest Saturday in Moscow.

According to Gaydar, the Democratic Choice Party is collecting signatures in a bid to "bring it home to the president that search for peace emerges as the only possible, morally acceptable, reasonable from the political and national points of view, and simply worthwhile strategy in the last few months before the presidential elections."

In Gaydar's view, President Yeltsin can score political victories only on the road for peace. Understanding of this by Yeltsin is the most important precondition for stabilization processes in the Northern Caucasus and Russia, Gaydar said.

The President's men are heatedly debating electoral strategies, including "nationalistically-imperial," Gaydar said, and may come to see stepped-up war action and an eventual victory in the war in Chechnya as a clue to Yeltsin's victory in the elections.

Gaydar sees this strategy as suicidal from the political point of view and "gory and madly expensive, hopeless."

Now that most citizens vote for peace, Yeltsin may try to win popular support by launching a peace crusade, Gaydar said.

The Democratic Choice Party refuses to see the collection of signatures as a purely partisan drive and hopes for assistance from other opponents of the war in Chechnya, Gaydar also said.

Russia: Borovoy To Head Duma Commission on Chechen POW's

LD0202183796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1612 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Independent State Duma member and leader of the Economic Freedom Party Konstantin Borovoy has become chief until March 2 of the State Duma's commission for talks with the federal authorities and supporters of Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on the release of prisoners of war, civilians held by force and those missing in the Chechen conflict.

The commission, formed by the State Duma on January 31 for three months, elected Borovoy its chief on Friday. The commission consists of 18 deputies representing all factions and groups of deputies in the State Duma, as well as independent deputies.

Borovoy has said in an interview that he is going to leave for Chechnya within days. He will meet with Oleg Lobov, presidential envoy to Chechnya, Vyacheskav Tikhomirov, federal forces commander in Chechnya, and head of the Chechen Republic Doku Zavgayev. Borovoy also hopes to have meetings with Dzhokhar Dudayev, Shamil Basayev and Salman Raduyev, the leaders of Chechen attacks on Budennovsk and Kizlyar.

Borovoy believes it is necessary to discuss the problem of exchanging prisoners of war and measures to search for those missing with Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and Interior Minister Anatoliy Kulikov.

Borovoy said that the commission's members, Colonel Aleksey Lebed and General Eduard Vorobev, had accepted his request to lead contact groups in Moscow and in Groznyy respectively.

The question of electing a chairman of the Duma commission will be decided later.

Russia: Belyayev Reiterates Peaceful Stand on Chechen Issue

LD0302210196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Video report by Aleksandr Izraelyan at Vnukovo-2 Airport; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Viktor Chernomyrdin was not asked what was happening about Chechnya. And if one takes into consideration yesterday's news conference by Russia Is Our Home Duma faction leader Sergey Belyayev, at which he declared there could be no military outcome of the conflict, and [head of the Chechen Republic] Doku Zavgayev's recent announcement of the possibility of the federal troops withdrawing from Chechnya within two weeks, then it is clear the question has been left up in the air. We tried to get Sergey Belyayev himself to cast some light on the situation. He was seeing the prime minister off to Sochi.

[Begin Belyayev recording] We are in fact against any populist actions along the lines of it being necessary to withdraw the troops immediately and so on and so forth. It needs serious and painstaking work, the first stage of which in fact lies at the basis of the accord on military issues. The matter can be resolved by military means. The question is whether it should be done on one's own territory? Should it be done in one's own country against one's own people?

Then another question arises. There are bandits, bandits who can terrorize the entire country, and not only the entire country but the entire world. Can such a great country as Russia permit a hotbed of international terrorism on its territory? Of course it cannot. And no great country would permit anybody to tear away even a yard of land from its territory just like that.

Some people might say that the movement's position differs from that of the government but if one builds up the whole spectrum of opinions, everyone will understand everything. [end recording]

So, neither peace nor war, a bundle of unsolved problems, thousands of billions out of the budget, lives lost and hostages every day. When and how will all this be resolved? Aleksandr Izraelyan, NTV television from Vnukovo-2 Airport.

Russia: Khasbulatov's Union Calls For Chechen Peace

LD0302202396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1754 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, February 3 (ITAR-TASS) — The People's Union for the Revival of the Chechen Republic led by former Russian parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov called for reconciliation, tolerance, civic accord and peace in Chechnya.

In its appeal on Saturday, the Union urged the population to support the resumption of peace talks and the discussion of ways to settle the conflict in the republic.

It said that the Union could act as a guarantor of new nationwide elections in Chechnya in the spring or summer 1996 and initiate a referendum on its future government.

Russia: Southern Cities Back Novgorod Chechen Initiative

LD0302192596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1635 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KRASNODAR, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — The Association of Russia's Southern Cities has backed the initiative of the Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Boris Nemtsov, who called for collecting signatures in favor of ending the war in Chechnya without delay.

According to INTERFAX's correspondent, the mayors of Elista, Cherkassk, Mozdok, Armavir and Kislovodsk, and deputy heads of the Vladikavkaz, Nazran and Voronezh administrations attended the plenary session held by the association in Stavropol.

Speakers pointed to the ruinous nature of the war in Chechnya, the main burden of which is borne by the adjoining territories.

These territories, speakers said, have to deprive themselves of large amounts of money and resources to take steps aimed at preventing raids by Chechen militants and arms smuggling. In addition, they have to spend considerable funds on accommodating refugees.

The leaders of Russia's southern cities involved in the association planned a number of peace actions designed to contribute to the efforts to gain an end to the war in Chechnya.

CIS: Primakov, Ukraine's Shmarov Sign Military Documents

MM0202152196 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Valeriy Kovalev: "Visits to Belarus by Russian Foreign Minister and Ukrainian Defense Minister Take Place Under Banner of Integration"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minsk — The visit to the Belarusian capital by Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov which took place in the last two days of January was extremely busy, with literally every minute accounted for. He met with Belarus' top leaders — President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, parliament speaker Semyon Sharetskiy, and Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir — and had talks with his Belarusian colleague Uladzimir Syanko and with CIS executive secretary Ivan Korotchenya.

Judging from the statement made before his departure from Minsk for Kiev, where Primakov was headed, the head of the Russian foreign policy department was satisfied with the results of the visit. I have again seen for myself, he stated, that Belarus is a special partner and a special ally of ours, with which we have practically no disagreements or contradictions. I am confident that relations between our states will continue to develop along an ascending line. The next step in this direction will be the visit to Moscow by President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, which, the Foreign Ministry chief announced, is planned for March of this year.

A military delegation from Ukraine, headed by Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov, has also been in Minsk during these days. Its presence in the Belarusian capital was further confirmation of the development of integration ties between republics of the former Union. As a result of the talks held, the heads of the military departments signed seven documents, which, as Belarusian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Leanid Maltsaw stated, "open a new chapter in the two countries' relations in the military sphere." In particular, an agreement on cooperation in the sphere of air defense was concluded. Accords were reached on the training of officer cadres at military educational establishments in Belarus and Ukraine....

At a press conference devoted to the results of the visit Leanid Maltsaw and Valeriy Shmarov declared their readiness to increase and widen cooperation in the military sphere. The Ukrainian minister stressed at the same time that his country will remain a neutral state. "We do not intend to join the CIS Treaty on Collective Security," he said. "But Ukraine is not about to join NATO either. We attach priority to the development of bilateral ties with our neighbors, first and foremost Russia and Belarus."

CIS: Executive Secretariat Refuses To Accept Dniester Republic

LD0302152396 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1300 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The CIS Executive Secretariat refused to accept the unrecognized Dniester Republic in the Commonwealth of Independent States. This is mentioned in a letter sent to Dniester Republic President Igor Smirnov.

We remind you that at a referendum that was held on 24 December last year the absolute majority of the population of the Dniester Republic supported the idea of joining the CIS.

Russia: Airborne Brigade Joins Military Operation in Bosnia

LD0202130596 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1145 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — A Russian separate air borne brigade has joined the multinational operation in Bosnia, commander of the Russian Air Borne Troops Col. Gen. Yevgeniy Podkolzin told INTERFAX Friday [2 February].

He said paratroopers are patrolling the area and staying at check points to ensure the peaceful return of refugees. They are interacting with the 1st U.S. Armor division, also stationed in the Posavina corridor.

The majority of Russian paratroopers have not started the fulfillment of their tasks. They are just accommodating themselves in the region, said Podkolzin.

He will leave for the Balkans on February 5, and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev will visit the Russian brigade next week.

The 1,500 Russian paratroopers and their materiel were brought to the Balkans by January 31 on board 11 trains and 76 flights of military-cargo planes.

The paratroopers are armed with 62 paratrooper combat vehicles, 28 armored vehicles, 4 BTR-3D combat vehicles, 8 NONA self-propelled artillery launchers, 16 portable air defense launchers and 310 vehicles.

The brigade is stationed in the Serb-controlled eastern part of the Posavina corridor in Bosnia.

Russia: Grachev To Visit Troops in Bosnia 8-11 Feb

LD0202145596 Moscow Radio Rossii Network
in Russian 1400 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev is planning to visit the Russian UN Protection Force brigade in Bosnia on 8-11 February, RIA correspondent was told at the Ministry of Defense. Grachev will also make a brief visit to Yugoslavia to meet with the country's military and political leaders.

Russia: TV on Release of French Pilots in Bosnia

LD0402191296 Moscow Russian Public Television
First Channel Network in Russian
1220 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Summary] The 15-minute program "Bosnian Secrets," written by journalists Vladimir Grigoryev and Igor Rostovtsev and narrated by Lev Viktorov, chronicles the shooting-down over Pale of two French Mirage pilots in August 1995 and the key role played by Russian special services in efforts to get them released from Bosnian Serb captivity. Video accompanying the program shows damage inflicted by NATO planes on housing and civilian infrastructure in Serb areas. Pictures of the stricken Mirage and the two pilots descending by parachute are also shown.

The program begins by explaining that peace had begun to return to Bosnia as a result of the Dayton accord. The narrator then goes back to the events of August 1995 and the NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. The commentary juxtaposes NATO assertions that only military targets were being attacked with pictures of large-scale damage to apartment buildings and the university in the Serb-held sector of Sarajevo. In the course of two weeks, 5 billion dollars' worth of damage was done to civilian infrastructure in the Serb Republic, the narrator said. Then, on 30 August, a Mirage-2000N piloted by Captain Frederic Chiffot and Lieutenant Jose Souvigne, was hit by Serbian anti-aircraft fire over Pale. Video shows the aircraft on fire and the two pilots coming down by parachute.

Speaking in Serbo-Croatian, with superimposed Russian translation, Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, explains: "When the pilots fell into our hands, they looked like two frightened boys. Most people felt they should be put on trial for what they had done to us. We could easily have done that. If that had happened, the reputation of President Chirac and France would have been severely damaged. So, we bided our time and waited until the pilots' fate could be decided differently."

Wreckage of the plane on the ground is then shown. It was explained that, although the pilots were treated well, nothing was heard of them for a long time. There were claims that they were being held by Serb irregulars or Muslim fundamentalists. They might even be dead. In an interview with journalists, Charles Pasqua, the former French interior minister, said, in French with superimposed Russian translation: "At the outset it was extremely important for us to find out whether they were alive or not. We felt it was pointless to ask the Americans, since they had no influence over the Serbs. After analyzing the situation we came to the conclusion that it would be best to ask our Russian friends to help."

The program says that when President Yeltsin visited France in October, Chirac asked the Russian president to do all he could to elucidate the fate of the captive pilots. Although the French were accused of having secret talks with the Bosnian Serbs and making concessions to them, they relied mainly on cooperation with the Russian special services. The narrator continues: "Jean-Charles Martigny, formerly an intelligence agent with 40 years' experience and now the prefect of Var department, arrived in Pale as a personal envoy from

Jacques Chirac. This was the first time I had worked in the open with people who were on the other side of the barricades during the Cold War, he recalled later. Martigny noted that he had dedicated his entire life to the struggle against the USSR's special services. Their high professionalism is a legacy of the Soviet past. The role of the Russian special services was crucial in getting the pilots' freed. Without their help the operation would have been impossible, Martigny believes.

"The first and only person to see for himself that Chiffot and Souvigne were alive and well was Colonel Vladimir Kulish of the Russian Federal Security Service."

Kulish, in a recording, says: "We took up this problem on personal instructions from the Russian president. You are well aware of [illegible] outcome. It was achieved not only because of cooperation between representatives of various special services but also because of purely humanitarian concern. This was particularly apparent in the sincere wish of the leadership of the Serb Republic to help us."

The narrator recaps the events leading up to the Dayton peace agreement, adding: "Let's not forget that during these weeks, NATO obtained carte blanche to replace the unsuccessful UN peacekeepers in Bosnia with its own multinational forces. As a result the Bosnian Serbs were forced to withdraw their heavy weapons from Sarajevo, to reconcile themselves to the loss of ancestral lands. The Muslims and Croats were effectively allowed to keep the positions they had overrun. The operation to rescue the French pilots reached a critical point."

Another excerpt of Karadzic is shown, in which he says: "Many officers in our army were against freeing the pilots. But we made a different decision since the views of President Yeltsin of Russia and President Chirac of France were decisive as far as we were concerned. By releasing the pilots and not putting them on trial, we did of course deprive ourselves of an opportunity to demonstrate to the entire world how much damage was done to us by NATO bombers. But, in that situation, it was more important to demonstrate true Serb humanism."

The narrator continues: "All interested parties were notified of the decision to release Frederic Chiffot and Jose Souvigne. But things proved less simple. Some people were very keen for this to be done without Russian involvement.

Another clip of Kulish is shown, in which he says: "Take, for instance, the actual arrangements for the handover of the pilots. President Karadzic once again showed himself to be a person who keeps his word and does what he says he will do. For various reasons we were late for this ceremony. In our absence it did not begin. And here the Serbs' sincere recognition of Russia's role in resolving this difficult problem was demonstrated yet again."

The French pilots were eventually released on the morning of 12 December, the narrator says. The handover took place in the Serb town of Zvornik. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the French and Russian presidents. Continuing his interview with the Russian correspondents, Radovan Karadzic says: "All this time we regarded the downed Frenchmen as people who were executing other people's orders. We treated them humanely — unlike those who sent them to drop bombs on us. I think it was far better for us to release them rather than put them on trial. After all, this would have done great damage to the interests of both France and NATO as a whole."

The narrator recalls how, during the handover ceremony, the pilots were unwilling to answer questions from the press and would not even say whether they were tortured or not. Pasqua comments: "During our search for the pilots we were also trying to find out whether they were being treated properly. After all, we had learned from Pale TV programs that they had been wounded. They were reports on this in the French press too, notably on attempts by the Bosnian Serbs to treat them as hostages rather than POWs. But now we know for sure that Chiffot and Souvigne were not tortured."

After showing footage of General Ratko Mladic at the handover ceremony, the narrator continues: "Certain military figures were very unwilling to acknowledge that the special services had bypassed them during this controversial episode. According to Vice Admiral Jean-Luc Delauney, the republican president's chief of staff, the joy over the pilots' return was such that it completely overshadowed the means by which they were released. Nevertheless, the admiral acknowledged that the pilots' return to France was only made possible by Russia's assistance. French President Jacques Chirac expressed special gratitude to his Russian colleague, Boris Yeltsin, who, he said, worked very hard to ensure that Chiffot and Souvigne were able to spend Christmas at home.

"It is also worth noting that the joint operation carried out by Russian and French special services helped them overcome their prejudices about each other. It gave rise to hope that such cooperation is possible in future, too."

The narrator says that the pilots' release encouraged the French to look at the Bosnian problem in a new light and to adjust their Balkan strategy. "Here one could conclude this account if it were not for one curious admission. An American agent, who used to hold an authoritative position in the past, said that for the first time in 20 years Russia's special services had publicly scored off the United States, adding moreover that this had been achieved through the Bosnian operation."

Russia: Kokoshin Calls NATO's Expansion 'Unacceptable'

LD0402132696 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0855 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Interview with First Deputy Defense Minister Andrey Kokoshin by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given — live or recorded; from the "I Serve Russia" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Andrey Afanasyevich, NATO has its own objectives in this world. Russia too has its national interests. Of course, nowadays one cannot talk about two opposing systems, about two military and political blocs. Nevertheless, there are points on which Russia and NATO disagree. Therefore, NATO's plans to expand its sphere of influence eastward to Russia's borders are causing great concern. How does the Defense Ministry — and you as deputy defense minister — view the situation? What is Russia's attitude?

[Kokoshin] I believe that Russia's national interests, our security interests, and the interests of our friends and allies require that this military and political alliance, which was created under specific circumstances with specific aims in view, and which carries specific traits, as it were, does not move eastward. NATO must not be a substitute for a pan-European structure. This process interferes with the principles of coexistence that have been formulated at previous stages. The process will not serve the goals it proclaims.

This is unacceptable to Russia for a number of reasons, including national security interests. Of course, there is no confrontation in Europe now as there used to be. However, when the creation of a new structure of relations in Europe was discussed, NATO's eastward expansion was not provided for. [passage omitted on personal details of Kokoshin]

Russia does not want confrontation with NATO, but at the same time we intend to defend our interests and build our relations on a basis of equality. Our Western partners must recognize our legal rights and security interests. Of course, at the same time we do not view Central and Eastern European countries as second-class states. However, they must also be sensible in assessing the situation in Europe and assume that their inclusion in NATO will hardly add to their security or raise the level of their sovereignty, for which they yearned for so long. [video shows archive footage of Kokoshin and Kokoshin being interviewed]

Russia: Army Paper Views Relations With U.S., CIS

MM0502113296 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 2

[Article by Aleksandr Golts under the "Topic of the Week" rubric: "From the Potomac to the Pyandzh and Dnieper Rivers...."]

[FBIS Translated Text] It looks as if the multivectorial nature of Russia's foreign policy, the need for which has been the topic of much that has been said and written recently, did finally and tangibly materialize in the course of this week. While head of government Viktor Chernomyrdin upheld Russian interests in Washington, diplomatic department chief Yevgeniy Primakov toured the CIS countries in fulfillment of the promise made during his first press conference. After Central Asia, which he visited together with the minister of defense, Primakov made his way to Belarus and then to Ukraine. The upholding of Russian interests on the banks of the Pyandzh and Dnieper Rivers is as important as doing so on the banks of the Potomac.

But let us begin with America. By some strange coincidence, each session of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission, which was created to resolve questions of economic cooperation, coincides with the latest crisis in relations between Moscow and Washington. Therefore, an unconditional failure is predicted for each session. In this context, no matter how hard you may try, it is impossible to avoid the already hackneyed comparison of Russian-U.S. relations with a newly-married couple's life. This life is too reminiscent of mutual relations between Moscow and Washington. Moreover, it is accepted that crises at the start of family life are caused by one partner's misunderstanding of some step by the other or by lack of mutual confidence. Thus, the latest "cooling down" was obviously caused by the fact that many people in the United States have been only too diligent in their Kremlin watching. In other words, they have been making forecasts about the future of Russia and its reforms on the basis of cadre changes in the country's leadership.

Nevertheless, having expressed dissatisfaction with the other partner's actual or imagined shortcomings, the other spouse rather quickly realized that it would be better not to make too much of it. In today's circumstances, any "divorce" between Russia and the United States would mean troubles, and certainly not just for Moscow alone. And the best way to settle relations is in the course of some joint endeavor. In our case, this endeavor was provided by the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission's sixth session. The U.S. President took advantage of the session to declare: The Russian reforms are progressing normally and the White House does not doubt the Kremlin's desire to pursue them. Furthermore, this time the U.S. Administration tried to offer some sort of backup for its words about support. Thus, it was during the last few days that the Export-Import Bank of the United States approved a credit line of 1 billion [dollars] for the purchase of engines for the Il-96 aircraft from Pratt and Whitney. Let me remind readers that this deal was being deliberately obstructed by U.S. companies, which had been banking on establishing control over the aviation market in the CIS.

It is an equally important fact that high ranking U.S. spokesmen openly and bluntly declared that they support the plans by the IMF (where Washington can pull powerful levers of influence) to give Russia an extended credit of $9 billion. A series of important agreements were signed during the commission session, agreements which, in the long run, should give our country an opportunity to earn rather than to borrow money. Like, for example, the agreement on space activity.

But even though the pessimistic forecasts clearly failed to materialize, there are no ground for any excess optimism. The United States certainly does not intend to hurry and review its legislation so as to create conditions for expanding Russian exports. Many Russian commodities are liable to absolutely draconian import duties. Thus, even if some changes do occur, they will do so extremely slowly. The aforementioned contract with Pratt and Whitney has been under discussion for the best part of a couple of years.

Even though cooperation with the West can be exceptionally useful for Russia in the long run, for the time being it is clearly not yielding the returns which Moscow was expecting a couple of years ago. At the same time, the dependence of Russia's domestic development and stability on the situation in the CIS is becoming increasingly obvious. The time has come not only to proclaim that our most vital interests are linked with the Commonwealth but also to effectively pursue them.

Today Moscow is evidently setting itself the goal of elaborating a new and more energetic policy toward the CIS states. And Yevgeniy Primakov's tour of a series of newly independent states is indicative in this regard. It is worth noting that bombastic statements were virtually absent during the course of the visits to Dushanbe, Tashkent, Minsk, and Kiev. Hardly any information at all was forthcoming about Yevgeniy Primakov's talks with the leaders of the new states. This at least proves that the questions under discussion were really complex. In Belarus, for example, as far as we can make out, discussion centered on the extent of integration with Russia. Today, as the Belarusian president noted, "we have already succeeded in creating a legal field for the development of integrational processes" which needs to be given a fresh impetus. It is assumed that a new step will be taken during Alyaksandr Lukashenka's visit to Moscow in March. But diplomats have to agree right now on what each of the sides is prepared to pay for integration, so as to avoid the disappointments of past years.

Even more complex problems were discussed during the talks in Kiev. After all, Russia and Ukraine are about to create the requisite legal field for cooperation. This field ought to be provided by the wide-ranging treaty between the two states. But its signing has already been postponed on several occasions. The reason is well known: The unresolved problem of the Black Sea Fleet's division on which, as reported, Primakov and his Ukrainian partners actually focused. After all, it is necessary to resolve it before Boris Yeltsin's visit to Ukraine, which is scheduled for early April. In any case, the prevailing situation cannot be accepted as normal.

Events prove that any attempt to leave unresolved problems "as they are," expecting that a solution will present itself automatically, only renders these problems more serious. This is proved by the exacerbation of the situation in Tajikistan. Now, after the antigovernment demonstrations in Tursunzade and Kurgan-Tyube which were signs of a serious crisis for the ruling regime, it is becoming obvious why Moscow is so rigidly insistent that official Dushanbe should conduct a productive dialogue with all parties to the conflict. Russia cannot allow its peacekeeping forces to get involved in a domestic conflict. Nor can it allow a resumption of the civil war which threatens to "Afghanize" the whole of Central Asia. And whereas Pavel Grachev was resolving problems concerning the strengthening of the republics' defense capability during his recent tour of Central Asia, Yevgeniy Primakov faces a completely different task. Namely, to ensure a common approach by all states toward the political solution of conflict situations.

Of course, now it is difficult to talk about successes in relations with CIS countries. Even though the fact that, during Primakov's visit, not only Minsk but also Kiev agreed with Russia's stance on NATO's expansion is worth quite a lot. Successes will be achieved when Russia focuses on the CIS.

Russia: Army Paper Interviews U.S. Ambassador Pickering

MM0202122296 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Feb 96 p 3

[Abridged account of interview with U.S. Ambassador to Russia Thomas Pickering by unidentified KRASNAYA ZVEZDA staffers at the KRASNAYA ZVEZDA editorial office on 26 January, "prepared for publication" by Mikhail Pogorelyy: "The United States Is Continuing the Policy of Support for Russia's Reforms" — first four paragraphs are introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] As we have already reported, U.S. Ambassador to Russia Thomas Pickering visited the KRASNAYA ZVEZDA editorial office. At a meeting with the newspaper's staffers there was a detailed discussion of trends in Russian-U.S. cooperation in the political, economic, and military spheres, the differences that exist here, and the prospects for the development of partnership and collaboration. We offer for your attention an abridged (purely because of limited space) account of this dialogue.

Relations with Russia, Thomas Pickering noted at the beginning of the meeting, are exceptionally important for the United States, and not only because they touch on the spheres of defense and security, but also because they are constructive in nature. These relations, according to the ambassador, are built on three "pillars" — assisting Russia's reforms in the economic sphere and progress toward an open type of market economy; backing a democratic future in the country's political life; and supporting Russia as an active participant in international life. Here the United States unconditionally recognizes the Russians' right autonomously to determine both the strategy and the tactics for these processes and to work out the details of their actual implementation. We believe, the U.S. diplomat stressed, that the United States and Russia can work together in order to jointly tackle the complex problems of today, seeking not control of the rest of the world, but cooperation with it in building the future.

Problems — and this must be admitted frankly — remain. Sometimes they are very substantial (for instance, there are different approaches to the problem of NATO expansion or the future of the Bosnia settlement, to the next steps in the cause of disarmament, and so forth). However, nowadays, unlike in the "Cold War" period, our countries have learned to find mutually acceptable and mutually beneficial compromises, renouncing the policy of restraining one another in favor of the policy of restraining differences and problems. After all, our common fundamental principle today is the mutual desire for peace, freedom, equality, and humanism.

The ambassador then answered questions from KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's staffers.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Mr. Ambassador, how well do you think you have gotten to know Russia in nearly three years of working here?

[Pickering] I was in the Navy once (1956-1959, after graduating from university and before joining the diplomatic service — editor's note) and one of my tasks was the selection of targets on the Soviet Union's territory for our nuclear missiles. I felt then that I was studying Russia in this way. I continued to get acquainted with it in my years of work as part of the disarmament delegation, when I visited your country several times. Directly before being appointed ambassador, I received a lot of information at briefings and from reports. But I admit I was not prepared for the scale of the changes that I found here in 1993.

As of today, I have visited 49 of the 89 components of the Russian Federation. In the past two years I have traveled more than 30,000 km by car. The changes in the regions are striking and multifaceted. They no longer wait for instructions from Moscow, they display their own economic initiative and autonomy, only deciding financial and tax questions with the center.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Would you have liked to be Russian and live here not as a guest, but permanently? And how do you assess the possibility of the restoration of communism in Russia?

[Pickering] Of course, as a guest in your country I most often encounter the good things in life. I like a lot of things here, you have a beautiful country, very rich. Many people, when they talk about riches, mean oil, gold, diamonds — but one should not forget people too. To be frank, I don't know how the Russians see their future. But I feel that faith in a better future lives on among the people (and it probably helped Russia to survive in the most difficult times and to become a great power). In my dealings with not just political leaders but ordinary people too, I have not met a single person who is not proud of his country, its culture, its great history, who would not be prepared to defend it — and that is what makes a country great....

I understand what lies behind your question. Yes, ordinary people in Russia face very many difficulties: money, housing, general prosperity, environment, crime, as well as uncertain prospects because of the huge changes. But we Americans think you are on the right road. As for the problems, they are in many ways similar to those that face American society too.

As for the prospects of the "restoration of communism".... Their bankruptcy was demonstrated first and foremost by the communist approach to the development of the country's economy, and your leaders understand that. Even those present-day leaders of the Russian Communists whom I have met with recently do not feel nostalgic for the past and are not seriously considering returning to it. The majority of them hold positions close to social democracy. The disturbing thing is their lack of clear economic programs or concepts. Basically the main thing here is to find the right balance between the state and private sectors of the economy, between economic efficiency and the return as regards social guarantees to the population. The search for this balance goes on everywhere, including in the United States.

But nobody actually wants to return to the past. I personally would not be willing to go back to the past in the States, no matter who was pushing us back — communists, nationalists, or anyone else.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] One often comes across the assertion that a weak Russia is advantageous to the United States and that it is in the interests of the latter not to permit an increase in Russia's might....

[Pickering] I think it would simply be madness to provide economic assistance to the tune of 3, 4, or 5 million dollars and to cooperate in the sphere of international security while having it in mind to weaken Russia.... If the United States only wanted to siphon off raw materials resources from here, why would we be setting up enterprises here, investing money, and leveling out the balance of trade? In the end we would be erecting barriers to mutual trade, whereas in fact we are breaking them down.

Of course, every state has its conservatives and radicals who seize on a phrase and make a policy out of it. But the majority are not behind them. There are such people in America, and you know them here in Russia. The truth can only be reached in the course of open, frank discussion. This year is a big election year in the United States and Russia. Many people in our country, in the heat of the political debate, predict the collapse of the White House's Russian policy. Incidentally, such pessimistic assessments are to the liking of many journalists. "Hot" news means sales, fame, and money for journalists. Have you ever seen a newspaper headline: "10 Million People Survive Earthquake"? Instead, they write: "100, 200, 300 Killed...."

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] You say that the United States supports the Russian reforms and helps Russia economically. But the Congress and government have authorized the development of the program for the construction of B-2 bombers and other strategic arms systems that are necessary to penetrate air defense systems which exist only in Russia and China. Any Russian government will correspondingly spend considerable sums on the creation of appropriate defensive systems. That means another arms race, but will the money for it be taken out of the budget for reforms?

[Pickering] Despite all of the progress we have made on arms control, each side is developing new weapons systems. But originally, for instance, it was planned to buy 200 B-2 aircraft, while today funds have been allocated for only one-tenth of that number.

Both countries are currently conducting limited studies [razrabotki] of theater missile defense systems so as to have the potential to rebuff a missile strike or the possibility of missile blackmail by third countries. But we believe that the ABM Treaty should be preserved. Furthermore I am sure that it is necessary to move on in the development of arms control regimes, particularly for strategic arms.

We believe that START II should be ratified (after the meeting at the editorial office the treaty was ratified by the U.S. Congress — editor's note). But the interesting thing is that President Clinton and President Yeltsin are hearing the identical objections from the Congress and from the Duma: The treaty is only in Russia's interest, or only in America's. It is interesting that in this case both are right, since it really is in the interests of both countries and also promotes worldwide security.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] In your introductory remarks you said that the United States does not intend to control the entire world. But, as you know, U.S. national security strategy provides for the strengthening of American influence in the most important regions of the world. The United States has recently increased the number of zones of vital interests from three to 10: Europe, Eurasia, Southeast and Southwest Asia, the Pacific, the Western Hemisphere, the Near East, and even Africa.... Don't you think that such a policy could be the source of another round of international tension?

[Pickering] That is a very important question. The United States remains concerned about so-called peripheral conflicts, and these are characteristic of practically all the regions you mentioned. Take the situation in the Persian Gulf in 1990: At that time an extremely serious threat against one of the major energy sources in the world came together with naked, unprovoked, and outright aggression against a sovereign state. The situation in Bosnia can be regarded in a similar light. But now both our countries have not only agreed on the need for a peace settlement, but are participating in its implementation. Basically the United States is pursing a policy not of expanding its zones of interests, but reducing them. For instance, the United States has taken two-thirds of its manpower and all of its nuclear weapons out of a most important region — Europe.

We firmly support NATO, since today it is the only force capable of handling the peace-implementing operation. Politically, we would not want to do it alone, and militarily, it's questionable whether we could do it alone. And it's very important that cooperation between Russia and the United States is developing in this sphere. The two countries' defense ministers alone have met four times in the last three or four months. Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Vice President Gore will be meeting within a few days (the meeting took place in Washington 29-31 January — editor's note). The two countries' presidents are in constant contact. In the near future they will be meeting in Moscow at the summit on the problem of nuclear disarmament, and then they will meet in France in the summertime.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Approximately every six months there is a wave of rumors in the United States about the worsening of the U.S.-Russian relationship. Every time, the administration copes with it. Just recently, Secretary of State Christopher, at Harvard University, noted worrisome signs of Russia's turning away from the policy of reform. At the same time he deems it necessary for Russia to integrate into Western structures, though only on condition that it will continue the reforms and abide by international norms. What can you say about that?

[Pickering] So far, our relationship has survived all the onslaughts of rumors of deterioration, and I believe it will continue to do so. The secretary of state did indeed indicate critical or dangerous areas in Russian policy, but that is his duty and his job. He made clear the essence of American policy: support for economic reform, democracy, and Russia's full participation in international life.

Your president moved very quickly to reaffirm his commitment to the policy of continuation of reforms. We have every reason to trust the president's statements. At the same time the concern over the state of the Russian-U.S. relationship in the two countries only emphasizes its importance and significance to each side. As for "door-watching" — seeing who's in and who's out — I don't consider it of fundamental importance.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Are you optimistic about the future, and which of today's problems worry you? And how did you take the reaction in Russia to your statements on Japan's rights to the Kuril Islands?

[Pickering] Frankly, I was surprised that you were surprised at what I said. After all, that has been American policy for the past 40 years, and it has not changed. So I was saying nothing new. It is one of the ambassador's duties to convey his state's official policy to the government of the host country. The fact that we have different approaches to international problems is no secret, and I said that too.

Now to optimism and pessimism. I regard as good signs the reduction in inflation, the decline in the fall of production in Russia, the growing stability of the ruble in the international exchange market, growth in the private sector. I, like many of your friends, was pleasantly surprised by the high level of activeness of the Russian population in the last election. It's a sign that people want to send their message to the leaders and are doing so in a democratic way.

There are worrying problems too: unemployment, crime, the potential threat to the democratic process, including attempts to put physical pressure on journalists (and journalism is one of the foundations of a democratic political system). But, like all of your country's friends, I hope that the good signs will increase and the bad signs will decrease.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Mr. Ambassador, how do you spend your free time, if you have any, of course?

[Pickering] I do, but not that much. My wife has more, she enjoys the ballet, opera, going to concerts. We both enjoy art and where possible we try to combine business trips with visiting museums and studying the architecture of Russian cities (not only Moscow and St. Petersburg). We recently visited Yuryev-Polskoy, Aleksandrovskaya Sloboda — wonderful places.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] What is your view of the prospects for the development of creative contacts between Russian and American military journalists?

[Pickering] It's a wonderful idea. You have much in common (even the titles, KRASNAYA ZVEZDA [RED STAR] and STARS AND STRIPES, both contain stars).

Russia: Deputy Premier Bolshakov Meets Abkhaz Leader

LD0302180696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1635 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Bolshakov met with leader of the self-proclaimed republic of Abkhazia Vladislav Ardzinba in Moscow today.

Abkhazia is a Georgian internal separatist republic.

The meeting was held behind closed doors, Bolshakov's assistant Eduard Krustkaln told INTERFAX.

Bolshakov and Ardzinba discussed possible measures for settlement of the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia, Krustkaln said.

Russia believes that Georgian-Abkhaz talks can be based on proposals put forward by Russia in 1995, Krustkaln said. Solutions acceptable both for Georgia and Abkhazia can be found proceeding from these proposals, he said.

Russian-Abkhaz consultations will be continued next week, sources in Bolshakov's apparatus told INTERFAX.

Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba told INTERFAX shortly after the meeting that he was satisfied with the renewal of political consultations with Russia.

Abkhazia has never renounced talks with Georgia, Ardzinba said. Political dialogue between the conflicting parties is still possible, he said.

Ardzinba said that Abkhazia's position regarding the CIS summit's decision to isolate it remained unchanged.

Earlier, Ardzinba said isolation of Abkhazia "aims at dragging it into Georgia under conditions proposed by Tbilisi."

Russia, Ukraine Share 'Common Strategy' on Foreign Policy

MM0502130496 Moscow TRUD in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Stanislav Prokopchuk: "Ukraine-Russia: A Common Strategy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Ukraine and Russia share a common strategy, and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's official visit to Kiev provided further confirmation of that.

The most tragic of all the problems currently being endured by all the countries of the former USSR is not simply the breakdown in economic ties but the complete destruction of our single market. Most of our goods cannot compete in any market except the CIS. That is why mutually advantageous and fundamentally new production and economic relations based on mutual respect must be built within the CIS framework.

The Russian foreign minister's dialogue with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Parliamentary Speaker A. Moroz, and Prime Minister Ye. Marchuk showed a perceptible desire to understand one another's position. The talks showed that the two countries' strategies on the majority of foreign policy and foreign economic questions remain largely the same.

At the end of the talks it was said that the draft of a full-scale treaty between Russia and Ukraine has already been prepared. It only remains to be signed. This is scheduled for 4-5 April when, as Yevgeniy Primakov announced, Boris Yeltsin will pay a state visit to Kiev.

Russia: Baltin To Turn Over Black Sea Fleet Command 5 Feb

LD0402174796 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The official handover of affairs by Admiral Eduard Baltin to Vice Admiral Gennadiy Suchkov, appointed acting commander of the Black Sea Fleet until a final official decision, will take place in Sevastopol tomorrow.

The decision to dismiss Admiral Eduard Baltin and to appoint a new commander, in the opinion of the staff's leadership, will in no way affect the process of the division of the Black Sea Fleet.

The fate of the fleet, a command spokesman told us, was predetermined by the actions of and agreements between the political leaders of Russia and Ukraine. Therefore the leadership of the fleet hopes that the process of division will be calmer and more civilized with the change of commander.

The command of the fleet considers the statements in some mass media in Ukraine that the fleet will soon be cut down to the size of a division to be unfounded and provocative.

All of Russia's fleets have been affected by cuts over the past few years. However, the leadership of the Russian Navy is convinced that this process won't affect the fleet's combat ability and the reliability of the guarding of the state's southern frontiers.

Two candidates for the post of commander are named in the Black Sea Fleet headquarters: that is Vice Admiral Gennadiy Suchkov, deputy commander of the Black Sea Fleet, and Vice Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, first deputy commander of the Baltic Fleet.

Russia: No Support Seen for Russian Separatists in Estonia

LD0202215796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1728 GMT 2 Feb 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TALLINN, Feb 2 (INTERFAX/BSN) — The position of the Russian population in Estonia is the chief reason for the growing cooling in

Russian-Estonian relations, the deputy chief of the second European department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Aleksandr Udaltsov has said.

Interviewed by the Estonian newspaper EESTI PAEVALEHT, Udaltsov, who is responsible for Russia's relations with the Baltic countries, said that most Russians in Estonia would like to acquire Estonian citizenship, however, their chances of getting it were bleak.

"Those people became foreigners overnight. We believe this is unfair," Udaltsov said and recalled that for that reason many Russians living in Estonia were desperate.

The diplomat said many Russians in Estonia were adopting Russian citizenship, which he described as a very dangerous trend. At the same time he is certain that there is no risk of an internal armed conflict in Estonia.

Udaltsov said that Russia would never support separatist sentiment among Estonia's Russians, even if Russian citizens in northeastern Estonia demand autonomy.

Udaltsov believes that Estonian politicians are the first to blame for poor relations with Russia. He confessed, though, that Russia had made mistakes, too.

Udaltsov fears that Estonian politicians are utterly confused whom they should see as their allies in Russia. "Many Estonian politicians regard Russia as the Soviet Union. They don't understand that Russia is an entirely different country," he said.

Udaltsov doubts the ability and desire of Estonian politicians to improve relations with Russia.

He dismissed the idea that the former USSR occupied Estonia in 1940.

"True, the way the Soviet Union acted was far from civilized, however, formally and juridically there are no reasons to describe those events as occupation, because there was no armed invasion," Udaltsov said.

He believes that Russian-Estonian relations are already complicated and it would make no sense digging up bones. "For a start we might delicately sidestep that question," he speculated.

Udaltsov said that Russia was for forming a Russian-Estonian commission that would study the archives to formulate a joint historic assessment of those events.

"Deplorably, that idea has failed to meet with Tallinn's support," the diplomat said.

Russia: Yeltsin Approves Treaty With Iran on Legal Assistance

LD0202201296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1732 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 2 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, his press service said, has by his instructions approved the draft treaty between the Russian Federation and Iran on legal assistance and legal relations on civil, family, and criminal cases presented by the Russian Justice Ministry in agreement with the Russian Foreign Ministry, and initially worked out with the Iranians. Russian Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev has been instructed to sign on behalf of the Russian Federation the mentioned treaty on having reached an agreement with Iranian side.

Russia: U.S. Fears Over Iran's Bushehr Powerplant Viewed

LD0302151896 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in English 1210 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Russian specialists are continuing work to prepare completing the construction of a nuclear power plant in Bushehr on the Iranian cost of the Persian Gulf. Comment is by Aleksandr Kushnir, and this is what he writes.

The Russian-Iranian contract for completing the first unit of the station was signed in January of last year. Construction of the unit was begun by the German company Siemens about 20 years ago. It will be a reactor of a light-water type. The cost of the contract is about 800 million dollars. There are approximately 30 Russian nuclear physicists in Bushehr. According to one of the leaders of the Russian organization dealing with the building of nuclear power plants abroad, Aleksandr Bryukhov, the structures at the site of the future plant will be surveyed in three months' time. So far all the works are being conducted on schedule and the facility is expected to become operational in approximately five years. Aleksandr Bryukhov stressed that Bushehr is regularly visited by experts of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Up until now they approved all the operations and rendered every assistance. They have no doubt that the facility in Bushehr will not be used for building an Iranian nuclear weapon. In this context it is worth remembering that the United States made a lot of effort last year to convince Russia to give up the project, as the Americans claimed Iran would use the nuclear reactor to build an atom bomb. Meanwhile, Iran is a participant in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is not going to withdraw from it. It is also well known that under the treaty the nuclear powers should help other signatories to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. So, having undertaken to help Iran in the building of a nuclear power plant, Russia is acting in accordance with the treaty. And judging by everything, the American objections to Russia's involvement in a nuclear project in Iran are dictated not by the fears that that country might get hold of a nuclear weapon, but by competition considerations. As a matter of fact, American companies, specializing in nuclear technologies hold a leading position on the world market of such technologies. And Russia through its cooperation with Iran is capable of proving that its nuclear technologies are at least not inferior to American ones. Comment was by Aleksandr Kushnir.

Russia: Move Toward Restoring Economic Relations With Iraq

MM0502094096 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 15

[Report by Andrey Alekseyev: "Baghdad Repays Long-Standing Debts"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of the fifth anniversary of the end of "Desert Storm" (January-February 1991) Russia has decided to promote the restoration of relations with Iraq — the former Union's largest economic partner in the Arab Islamic world. Russian humanitarian aid, including foodstuffs (up to 150 tonnes), medicine, woolen goods, and children's clothing, has been sent to the country. This is the first time that Russia has provided such aid to Iraq since the imposition (in 1991) of the UN Security Council embargo on any ties with the country.

Since 1994 an ever-growing number of countries and nongovernmental organizations have been providing humanitarian shipments to Iraq. Such shipments have also been sent to Iraq by the Central Asian republics since 1994 and even, since 1995, by certain Russian autonomous regions (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Kalmykia, and Chuvashia). It seems that the Russian Federation Government has followed their example by granting official permission for "centralized" humanitarian aid to that country.

Owing to the UN sanctions, Iraq has experienced a sharp rise in infant mortality, and supplies to the population of food and medicine — particularly in rural areas — have deteriorated. Baghdad's appeals to the United Nations to lift or at least ease the embargo had the following effect — the UN Sanctions Committee is not blocking the provision of humanitarian aid to the country, and will partially lift the ban on exports and imports of Iraqi oil and gas products until summer 1996. We would note that this committee is not preventing the resumption of activities in Iraq by foreign firms and banks — not least from the NATO countries. But applications from Russian financial-industrial structures and their counterparts from the other CIS republics for work in that country continue to be turned down. Nonetheless, during reciprocal visits to Russia and Iraq by official and nongovernmental delegations — visits which have become more frequent since 1995 — agreement was reached on the gradual resumption of economic, scientific, and technical ties between the two countries this year. Baghdad and Moscow hope that in 1996 the United Nations will lift the embargo on trade and cooperation with Iraq. Similar agreements are in place between Iraq and certain CIS republics (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan).

The Commonwealth countries, primarily Russia, are losing a lot from the anti-Iraqi UN sanctions — for instance, Iraq's debt to the former USSR stands at at least $10 billion. Baghdad is prepared to repay this debt to Russia — the lawful successor to the Union — either in the form of foreign currency payments and shipments of various goods, or by providing it with part ownership of the majority of economic projects built in the country with Soviet help between 1960 and 1980. These include the largest exploitable oil and gas fields in the Near and Middle East (in central and southern Iraq), terminals in the Persian Gulf, thermal electric power stations, and oil and gas pipelines.

According to assessments by Iraqi and Russian expert organizations, CIS capital investment in the Iraqi economy could come to a total of at least $12 billion — including Russian investment of up to $8 billion in the event of the UN sanctions being lifted. In particular, the Iraqi leadership is advocating the resumption of the construction in the country of 25 economic projects involving solely the countries and firms of the CIS — their construction, which was being carried out with the help of the former Union, was interrupted by the imposition of the UN embargo on Iraq. Proposals from other foreign companies to finish off the projects continue to be rejected by Baghdad.

Well, Moscow and Baghdad are waiting for the Iraqi blockade to be officially lifted. Many Commonwealth countries, which support the appeals from the Russian Foreign Ministry and other departments (in particular, the Ministry of Fuel and Energy) to the UN Sanctions Committee to lift the sanctions against Iraq, are allies of the Russian Federation's on this issue.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin, Seleznev Discuss Duma Priorities

LD0202195296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1612 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin held a meeting with State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev Friday, the presidential press service reported. The meeting lasted for more than an hour, it added.

The meeting focused on improving the Duma's legislative work, the press service said. Yeltsin stressed the need to improve the quality, preparation and legal expertise of laws adopted.

Making remarks about some practices widespread in the Duma, Yeltsin recalled cases when the previous lower houses of Russia's parliament adopted laws involving major financial costs without coordination with the government. This is a violation of the established procedure for making such decisions, he added.

Yeltsin said it would be useful to encourage the creation of conciliatory commissions and groups which would work out compromise decisions that would consider the opinion of all the branches of state power.

In addition, Yeltsin stressed the need for joint work between presidential bodies and Duma staff at the stage of preparation of draft laws, before they are submitted for parliamentary consideration.

Yeltsin spoke out against any such decisions that would contradict the existing constitution. He hoped the Duma would focus on legislative work and not turn into a floor for endless political arguments.

Speaking on the Duma's legislative priorities, Yeltsin paid much attention to ratification of the START-2 treaty. The greater security of not only Russia and the United States, but of the whole world, depends heavily on this, he added.

Yeltsin and Seleznev also discussed the current political situation in the country. Yeltsin supported closer cooperation between Duma deputies and executive bodies, in particular through interdepartmental commissions. He backed the idea of creating an interdepartmental commission for a Chechen settlement.

The two leaders also considered the situation with the ongoing coal and education strikes. Yeltsin reiterated his position, saying the payment of wages must be put in order immediately. He said he had given tough instructions to pay out delayed wages and improve the whole payment system.

Yeltsin and Seleznev also discussed some procedural issues concerning the work of the State Duma.

Russia: Seleznev Reports Yeltsin Comments on Strike, Chechnya

LD0202183196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Passages within quotation marks recorded; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputies in the State Duma were interested today primarily in the main news in Russia — the miners' strike:

[Correspondent Alim Yusupov] At today's morning sitting of the State Duma, Yuriy Shafranik, Russian minister of fuel and power engineering, expressed the opinion that the miners' strike should be regarded as a serious warning to the federal authorities. In the minister's opinion, the present conflict is connected in the first instance with the regular underfinancing of the sector from the federal budget. Shafranik called upon deputies to pay heed to the discussion of that problem and to adopt a special law to support the sector and guarantee the timely payment of wages to workers.

Possibly under the impression of the minister of fuel and power engineering, Gennadiy Seleznev, speaker of the State Duma, raised the miners' theme at his meeting today with the president of Russia. Seleznev said that Boris Yeltsin was quite well informed of the situation in the coal industry. The president was perplexed that the problem still has not been resolved.

[Seleznev] "He said that according to the report of the Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Finance, all the money which the government should pay back to miners for 1995 has been returned. He does not yet understand why the government cannot yet set up a mechanism, as the miners are asking and as was agreed in all trilateral agreements, for the money to be paid from the budget on a regular monthly basis."

[Yusupov] The president and the speaker of the lower chamber met face-to-face today for the first time and, as Seleznev thinks, the meeting, which lasted over an hour, should dispel any possible negative notions the president had concerning the new speaker. Yeltsin came out in favor of cooperation between all branches of power. The press service of the head of state reports that Yeltsin expressed the wish that the Duma should engage less in politics and more in law-making. The president hopes for fruitful work in this case.

[Seleznev] "He does not support vetoing any laws adopted by the Federal Assembly, but at the same time, he says many laws have been returned from presidential structures only on the grounds that they were drawn up hastily and not everything was verified."

[Yusupov] Gennadiy Seleznev told journalists that he asked the president all the questions which, in his view, he should have asked. One question concerned the fate of General Eduard Baltin, the recently dismissed commander of the Black Sea Fleet:

[Seleznev] "Representatives of the power structures persisted in their request to him over several weeks to sign the decree earlier since there were serious reprimands against Baltin. He did not sign the decree for a long time. He checked and rechecked the information which he received on how the admiral was acting in Sevastopol, but in the end he came to the conclusion that Baltin was not coping with that post."

[Yusupov] Nevertheless, the general has not been dismissed from the army and remains in service. Seleznev also said that Boris Yeltsin is preparing a new plan for a settlement in Chechnya which he will announce in a few days' time. The president did not tell the speaker in detail about that plan:

[Seleznev] "But I understood that what was at issue was not to use the army to put Chechnya down or to finish off military matters. He did not reveal his plans. He said that he will announce them soon. But I realized that the question of a peaceful solution of that conflict was the cornerstone, and was raised."

[Yusupov] On the whole, the journalists got the impression that the new speaker of the State Duma was satisfied with the meeting and the reception he was given. In any event, Seleznev noted with satisfaction that a direct telephone link with the president would soon appear in his office:

[Seleznev] "And when there are any urgent issues on which the president has to be telephoned, he said I should not hesitate to call him." [video shows Seleznev meeting president, addressing media]

Russia: Yeltsin Has 'No Doubt' About Election Timing

LD0202140896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1324 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 2 (ITAR-TASS) — President Yeltsin has expressed no doubt about the time fixed for holding presidential elections in Russia, at his meeting with Speaker of the State Duma, Gennadiy Seleznev told journalists today.

According to Seleznev, they discussed the creation of the all-Russian task group for preparing presidential elections, with Oleg Soskovets at the head. Yeltsin asked him what exactly in that idea the legislators did not like. Seleznev got the impression that at present it was just an idea to create such a task group. In this connection Seleznev told the President that, in his opinion, if Soskovets is appointed head of the task group, "everybody will realise that he is speaking not only with the first deputy prime minister, but also with the head of the task group." Seleznev believes that if Soskovets is appointed head of the task group, he should resign temporarily from his post in the government.

Seleznev said further that he had told Yeltsin about a "dubious benefit," conferred on the head of state by Minister of Railways Gennadiy Fadeyev. Fadeyev organised the collecting of signatures in support for Yeltsin's candidature at the presidential election, forcing workers to sign the lists. Yeltsin said in reply that he had had a "very tough conversation with the minister" about that. The president told Seleznev that he did not need the signatures, collected in this way.

Seleznev said as well that he had not discussed with Yeltsin a possible membership of the Chairman of the State Duma in the Russian Security Council.

Russia: Poll Shows Yeltsin's Popularity Growing

LD0202144496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin's popularity rate grew in the last week of January, 1996, according to the Public Opinion Foundation.

Should presidential elections be held now, as many as 10 percent of citizens polled by the Public Opinion Foundation would cast ballots for Yeltsin.

Yeltsin comes third in the crowd of presidential hopefuls, Foundation experts say.

In the previous poll he came sixth with only 6 percent of the respondents' vote.

Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov is still sitting at the top of the Foundation's rating list: as many as 17.1 percent of the respondents were ready to support his candidacy. YaBLoko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy follows with 11.3 percent of the popularity vote.

Liberal-Democratic leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy still comes fifth, with 8.9 percent of the popularity vote, whereas a leader of the Congress of Russian Communities General Aleksandr Lebed follows close on his heels, with 8.5 percent of potential votes.

As many as 8.8 percent of those polled favored other candidacies, and 11.9 percent had no intention of coming to the polling stations. As many as 23.4 percent of those polled were yet to make up their minds.

The Public Opinion Foundation polled 1361 citizens in various parts of the Russian Federation late last month.

Russia: Committee Set Up To Support Yeltsin Reelection

LD0202162596 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1400 GMT 2 Feb 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast; passages within quotation marks recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent T. Aldoshina] The committee of social support for Boris Yeltsin's presidential candidacy has been set up so that he can decide without hesitation to stand for a second term. This was stated today by Sergey Filatov. He considers that the committee should unite the efforts of all initiative groups that are at present proposing that Yeltsin should take part in this year's presidential elections. In this case, Vladimir Shumeyko's Reforms-New Policy movement — which is offering its support to the president — could also work within the social committee.

[Filatov] "Everything should be brought together in this social committee. Therefore, I think that the initiative should be taken for this movement, too, to join this social committee."

[Aldoshina] Filatov, who is one of Yeltsin's oldest supporters, did not deny today the changes that have taken place in the Russian president's image. However, he considers that this is a result of the harsh political struggle that is now taking place in Russia. Filatov is convinced that Yeltsin is still a democrat but no longer a radical one.

[Filatov] "All of us democrats, and radical democrats in particular, must simply draw conclusions from the results of the elections. Because, if the president goes in for the elections then naturally he needs to win, of course. It is possible and necessary to rely on the radical democrats but this cannot be his main basis."

[Aldoshina] Filatov says that Yeltsin's main achievement is the Constitution and, therefore, he considers that at present it is not necessary to create an ideology capable of uniting the people around Yeltsin.

[Filatov] "The Constitution gives priority to human rights, human rights and liberties. All the other questions are also resolved in it — free market economy, property — these are all the main questions. What further ideology is required?"

Russia: Leftists Urged To Back Zyuganov's Candidacy

LD0302154096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — If the candidate from the communist, nationalist and other leftist forces wins this year's presidential elections, this "will make it possible to extricate Russia from its catastrophic situation peacefully, without violence or civil war," said the Political Committee of the Union of Russia's Communist Parties in its statement INTERFAX received on Saturday.

The statement urges "the communists and other patriots" to support the decision taken by the Central Committee of Russia's Communist Party to nominate its leader Gennadiy Zyuganov as a candidate for presidential elections. The nomination of a common candidate from Russia's communist parties and patriotic movements makes it possible to consolidate the ranks of the opposition in its struggle for power — "against the destructive policy of the ruling circles," the statement points out. On the contrary, the organizations seeking to nominate "their own candidates disunite these forces and contribute to the maintenance of the unpopular regime," the statement says.

The document issued by the Political Committee of the Union of Russia's Communist Parties supports "the Russian communists' striving to unite and form a unified Communist Party."

Russia: Grachev Bans Military Election Propaganda

LD0302202196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1737 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Mikhail Shevtsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 3 (ITAR-TASS) — The Russian Defence Ministry expressed concern about the "activity of some members of initiative groups" collecting signatures in support of presidential candidates, sources in the ministry told ITAR-TASS on Saturday.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev urged military commanders at all levels to prevent such activities in military units and organisations.

He also stressed the need to comply with the law "On Defence" and prevent any attempts to involve the troops in the activity of political and public organisations conducting election propaganda.

Russia: Yeltsin Says Control Office Work Not 'Satisfactory'

MM0202125496 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 2

["Extract" from Russian Federation Presidential Control Administration report: "Power and Control. The Report of the Russian Federation Presidential Control Administration Has Been Submitted to Boris Yeltsin; ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI Has Been Granted the Right To Publish an Extract"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Having studied the facts and conclusions presented in the report, the Russian Federation president deemed it necessary to take urgent measures to eliminate imbalances in the socioeconomic development of a number of regions and create an effective mechanism for fulfilling the decisions adopted. Boris Yeltsin instructed Viktor Chernomyrdin to "examine the question of whether people who have failed to ensure the fulfillment of presidential edicts and government decrees on granting support to the regions are in the right jobs." The time limit for the fulfillment of this instruction from the president is February. Sergey Medvedev, the head of state's press secretary, stressed that Boris Yeltsin believes that those state officials — irrespective of the position they hold — who are unable to ensure the fulfillment of presidential edicts and government decrees should be subject to the strictest accountability, up to and including dismissal from their jobs. The press secretary also reported that on studying the Control Administration's report Boris Yeltsin noted that "the Control Administration itself is not doing satisfactory work."

Of course, a vast number of checks have been carried out in different spheres and in various regions, a great many violations have been uncovered, measures have been formulated, strongly worded resolutions have been put on record, but all the same, the impression is mixed: Many presidential edicts and government decrees are not being fulfilled. The authorities are being accused of impotence from right and left, as if to force them mercilessly to punish those who violate state discipline. But the days of the punitive hand of party control Pelshe-style [reference to late CPSU party control chief] have gone beyond recall, although some people may be sighing nostalgically for them. However, the question of increasing the effectiveness of state administration, strengthening performance discipline, and increasing officials' personal accountability remains pressing. It is not a good thing for the payment of wages to be delayed, for people not to receive their pensions on time, for officials to "sit on" presidential directives. But the Control Administration can at best only note all this, give warnings, and bring it to the attention of the relevant bodies. To change the situation would clearly require a widening of the powers of the Control Administration, so that it would be possible within the framework of legislation, without reviving punitive functions, to strive for unconditional execution of state decisions and smooth, efficient operation of the mechanism of executive power at all levels. [introduction ends]

The Control Administration's main efforts were concentrated on verifying the implementation of edicts, directives, and instructions of the Russian Federation president in priority areas of socioeconomic reform. The concentrated program of action was the head of state's Message to the Russian Federation Federal Assembly, which defines the question of the effectiveness of state power in Russia as one of the most important questions at the present stage.

In order to exercise its control functions, the administration identified major groups of issues stemming from these documents.

A check was carried out into the use of targeted federal budget funds in the agro-industrial complex. An analysis was carried out of the work of the Russian Federation Government, the Russian Ministry of Finance, and the Bank of Russia in improving the banking and taxation system, strengthening financial discipline in the implementation of the federal budget, and regulating the securities market.

The fulfillment of decisions of the Russian Federation president aimed at creating a favorable investment climate in a number of federal management organs and in Kirov, Kostroma, and Tver Oblasts was investigated. It was noted that despite the measures adopted the decline in investment activity was not reversed. Only one-third of the funds for the fulfillment of investment programs were allocated from the federal budget in 1995. The reduction in capital investments in these regions is leading to an increase in the number of construction projects that have been halted or mothballed. The fulfillment of the federal "Russian Flax Revival," "Private Farmer," and "Soil Fertility" programs and a number of others has been jeopardized.

In the country's agro-industrial complex as a whole, the decline in production is continuing, production sharing by commodity producers is being implemented only slowly, and a mechanism for state support for them has not been worked out. The federal budget funds that are allocated are misused, in significant volumes. The Russian Ministry of Agriculture and Food alone, in less than two years, permitted budget funds totaling 168.7

billion rubles [R] to be used for other than the specified purpose.

A substantial package of control measures was implemented on questions of the privatization of enterprises in the petroleum and petroleum refining industry and the supply of petroleum products in the Republic of Chuvashia and in Tyumen, Yaroslavl, and Nizhniy Novgorod Oblasts. A number of gross violations were uncovered. Through the fault of the Russian State Committee for the Management of State Property, the drafting of normative documents on the sector's privatization has been unjustifiably delayed and the activity of state representatives in joint-stock firms and companies is not being monitored. In 1992-1995 the volume of oil extraction was reduced by nearly 70 million tonnes, or 18 percent. The volume of exploratory drilling was halved, and the number of idle wells increased 40 percent. In the past two years the volume of capital investments in this sector of the economy has been reduced by just over 70 percent.

Checks were carried out into the fulfillment of normative acts of the Russian Federation president and Russian Federation Government decrees on state support for structural reorganization of the economy in a number of regions of the country. It was noted that opportunities for economic recovery are not being sufficiently exploited. The formation of financial and industrial groups has not prevented a decline in science-intensive production in the sphere of machine building and other areas of the economy. The process of development of sectors for the production of output designed to meet the population's social needs is going extremely slowly.

In the light of the continuing deepening of democratization of society the Control Administration investigated the implementation of the Russian Federation president's instructions on improving the work of local organs of power in Kursk, Novgorod, Ryazan, and Yaroslavl Oblasts. It emerged that the federal and regional organs of state power have yet to adopt laws and legal acts regulating the activity of local self-government organs or the reform of budgetary and land relations. Thus, constitutions (or charters) have been adopted in only 22 regions, laws on the organization of local self-government in 42, and laws on elections of local self-government organs and officials in 43 components of the Russian Federation.

Last year the Russian president and government adopted a whole series of documents aimed at developing culture, science, education, art, and social services to the population. However, checks carried out in the government apparatus and in a number of ministries and departments showed that many instructions remained only on paper. Thus, in the sphere of culture, out of eight normative acts of the president, five were not fulfilled in a timely manner. In Astrakhan, Voronezh, and Sverdlovsk Oblasts and the Karachayevo-Cherkess Republic, serious shortcomings were revealed during an investigation of the implementation of the head of state's decisions concerning the safeguarding and defense of citizens' economic and social rights.

Employment problems are becoming increasingly acute. The number of unemployed people registered with the employment service has risen from 1.6 million to 2.1 million. The potential concealed unemployment is more than 5 percent of the economically active population. Leaders of enterprises and organizations have virtually no accountability for the violation of citizens' labor rights, especially as regards payment for labor and the increase in the wage debt. In this connection notable errors were exposed in the work of the Russian Ministry of Social Protection, the Pensions Fund, the Ministry of Labor, and the Russian Federation Federal Employment Service.

The situation regarding the payment of citizens' pensions was analyzed in a number of regions and in Russia as a whole. A summarized report was submitted containing concrete proposals for improving the system of management of pension provision.

In conjunction with the Commission on Questions of Women, the Family, and Demography under the Russian Federation president, the Control Administration devoted keen attention to the fulfillment of the presidential "Children of Russia" program. An all-around analysis was carried out of the activity of the organs of executive power of Bryansk, Voronezh, Irkutsk, Kaluga, and Lipetsk Oblasts and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. Comprehensive programs have been drawn up in the regions. Institutions for assistance to families and children are being set up within the education system and under social protection services. However, the analysis showed that these questions have not yet become priorities. The funding of targeted programs and measures concerning children is carried out on the residual principle. In Irkutsk Oblast in the past two years less than 1 percent of the expenditure side of the budget has been used for these purposes, and in Voronezh Oblast the figure is about 2 percent. The problem of unsupervised children has become more acute. The network of preschool institutions is continuing to shrink.

The plan for comprehensive checks of ministries and departments drawn up by the Control Administration and approved by the Russian Federation president was implemented in 1995. With the involvement of experienced specialists, detailed checks were organized into the major federal organs of state administration which play a leading role in the practical implementation of economic reforms in the country — the Russian Federation Ministry of Finance, the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, the Russian Federation Ministry of Construction, the Russian Federation State Committee for the Management of State Property, and the Russian State Tax Service.

In the course of the checks a whole series of highly significant shortcomings and mistakes were uncovered. The results of the check at the Finance Ministry were heard at a Russian Federation Government session. The outcome of checks at the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations were discussed at sessions of the ministries' collegiums on the instructions of the government. It was decided to draw up an inventory of federal property abroad. Various forms of action were taken against officials for shortcomings in their work.

In a number of ministries and departments checks were carried out into the use and repayment of credits, including foreign credits. It was noted that the Russian Finance Ministry does not carry out checks on the appropriate and efficient expenditure of the funds received. As a result out of 150 enterprises and organizations which received foreign credits 33 did not make repayments on time. Considerable work has been done to prevent foreign currency resources received from foreign economic activity from leaking out of the country.

The monitoring of the course of economic reforms in the regions was continued in the light of the experience accumulated and new normative acts, with a detailed study of the socioeconomic situation in the localities. As is known, the Russian president and government have taken significant steps to strengthen socioeconomic support for the Republic of Kalmykia and for Kaliningrad and Sakhalin Oblasts. It has come to light, however, that a significant proportion of the funds allocated for the construction of facilities in Kalmykia's production and social sphere are being used for other purposes. There are instances of outright squandering of these funds. For Kaliningrad Oblast, it was decided to allocate R110 billion in credit and centralized capital investments for socioeconomic development in 1994. In practice only R30.5 billion was paid over. The agro-industrial complex, with a quota of R13.8 billion, was assigned only R0.4 billion. Normative acts on the allocation of subsidies for Sakhalin Oblast in 1993-1995 remained in effect unfulfilled.

Attention is centered on the fulfillment of the head of state's normative acts concerning the implementation of the migration program and the state targeted "Housing" program in the regions and other social problems. Taking the Republic of Adygea, Maritime and Altay Krays, and Penza, Smolensk, and Orel Oblasts as examples, it was noted that measures adopted at federal and regional levels to help citizens with the construction and acquisition of housing have yet to produce the expected results. The funding of housing construction is inadequate and work has not been organized to develop and utilize extrabudgetary funds for these purposes. The volume of uncompleted construction is being reduced only slowly.

In Kursk and Pskov Oblasts there was no integrated program for tackling the problem of refugees and forced migrants on the basis of the federal migration program. Following checks, the administrations in these regions adopted measures to eliminate the shortcomings noted.

A check was carried out into the fulfillment of Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 260 of 5 December 1991 "On Urgent Measures To Overcome the Crisis Situation in the Supply of Medicines and Medical Equipment." The state of affairs in the medical sphere is such that medical institutions are reducing the volume of free assistance to the population because of inadequate financing. The production of medicines has been almost halved.

With the connivance of the Russian Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, state and commercial organizations involved in supplying medicines and equipment in the country often use the allocated funds for improper purposes (improper use of funds totaled R539 million and more than $1.5 million). The price of medical preparations released to the population was overstated by R1.7 billion.

On the basis of the results of the check, a report was sent to the Russian Federation Government, as well as an injunction [predpisaniye] from the chief of the Control Administration to the Russian Federation minister of health and medical industry. By edict of the Russian Federation president, E.A. Nechayev, Russian Federation minister of health and medical industry, was relieved of his post.

To improve control activity, the administration has taken substantial steps to strengthen regional control, seeking to improve the efficiency of the work of district [okruzhnykh] inspectorates. The district inspectorates, in close contact with the administration's departments, carried out 53 checks within a six- month period.

In particular, a check was carried out into the course of fulfillment of decisions on questions of socioeconomic support for Mordovia, and the state of the material and technical base for the local press in Lipetsk, Orenburg, Samara, and Rostov Oblasts was studied. The fulfillment of the presidential "Children of Russia" program was checked on in the republics of Adygea, Khakasia, and Mariy El and in Belgorod, Volgograd, Kostroma, Kurgan, Leningrad, Sakhalin, Novosibirsk, and Murmansk Oblasts and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast.

The district inspectorates established the reasons for delays in the payment of state pensions in 11 regions of Russia.

Along with checks by the administration, control checks were carried out in the course of the year into the implementation of 1,200 instructions in all, contained in 422 edicts and directives of the Russian Federation president, as well as more than 1,300 direct instructions of the head of state to leaders of organs of executive power and administration of the Russian Federation.

The checks carried out by the Control Administration in 1995 resulted in:

— 49 reports [informatsiy] to the Russian Federation president;

— 174 reports to the chief of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff;

— 50 reports to the Russian Federation Government;

— 376 reports and letters to Russian Federation ministries and departments;

— 114 reports and injunctions to heads of administrations of krays and oblasts;

— 21 submissions to the Russian Federation General Prosecutor's Office.

In the majority of these cases concrete measures have been adopted, with the issuing of edicts and directives of the Russian Federation president and decisions of the government and of organs of federal and local executive power.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Affirms No Policy Changes

LD0302181996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Report over video by unidentified correspondent; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent, over video of Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in airport departure lounge] Last year, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin did not manage a vacation, so he decided to snatch two weeks now to take a rest before the election campaign and other urgent matters that are forecast to descend on him in the spring. The Cabinet leader did try to clear up a few things, notably in regard to the striking miners, the IMF, and distributing duties among his two first deputies. As for his vacation plans:

[Begin Chernomyrdin recording] In a couple of days I am flying back to Moscow. We will be holding conferences and in the first place, I will have talks with my Danish counterpart who is coming. We will be signing accords, too, that will be on the 8 February. On the 8th, too, we will be gathering a big council of Russia Is Our Home to determine our main tasks, sum up results, and to set a congress date. That will be at the beginning of March, I think. [end recording]

[Correspondent] When Chernomyrdin was asked about possible changes in government policy, he even became angry, but he described the Cabinet's main priorities thus:

[Begin Chernomyrdin recording] Of course, the time has come today when we need to pay more attention to social issues, to social problems. We must of course eliminate the tension that exists today: That means wages for organizations in the public sector; the problem over the miners is being tackled now; and then the arrears in student grants and in pensions must be sorted. We must get all these problems sorted in February, no matter how difficult it is for us.

But the policy as a whole, the policy of further improving market relations, will continue as it is, that is the main thing, the basic thing — we cannot now do things any other way. I do not think anyone today will be so bold as to change anything here, or even want to do so. [end recording]

Russia: Soskovets Heads Cabinet During Premier's Leave

LD0502121396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1123 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 5 (INTERFAX) — First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets is temporarily in charge of the Russian Cabinet, after Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin took a vacation on February 3 and left Moscow for Sochi, sources at the government staff told INTERFAX Monday.

Before his departure, Chernomyrdin signed an instruction to share out the duties of Soskovets and recently appointed First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kadannikov.

Soskovets' duties have not changed. He will remain in charge of industrial policy, military-technical cooperation, and the conversion and development of defense and civil industries, staff sources said.

He will head a number of governmental commissions, including the commission for current affairs and the commission for the updated structure of executive power institutions in Russia. While Chernomyrdin is on vacation, Soskovets will work as the prime minister.

He will coordinate the work of the Ministries of Fuel and Energy, Transport, Communications, Railroad, Construction, Health Care and the Medical Industry and the Nuclear Ministry, as well as the State Committees for Defense Industries, the Sanitary-Dermological Inspection, the State Committee for Chemical and Petrochemical Industries, the Committees for Metallurgy, Machine-Building, the Russian Space Agency and a number of other ministries and departments.

The newly-appointed first deputy prime minister will coordinate the development of economy, the budget, the financial, credit, monetary and currency systems and foreign loans. He will be in charge of the government commission against non-payments, and coordinate the work of the Ministries of Finance, Economics, the State Statistics Committee, the State Committee for Precious Metals and Gems, the State Tax Service and other departments.

However, Kadannikov's powers will be less than those of his predecessor, Anatoliy Chubays. One reason for this is that some powers were given to newly-appointed deputy prime minister and Chairman of the State Property Committee Aleksandr Kazakov.

The latter will be in charge of the State Committee for Anti-Monopoly Policy, the Russian Fund for Federal Property, and the Federal Commission for Securities and Stock Market under the Russian government.

Today, First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, acting cabinet head, will introduce Kazakov to staffers of the State Property Committee.

Chernomyrdin has nine deputies: first deputy prime ministers Soskovets and Kadannikov, and deputy prime ministers Aleksey Bolshakov, Aleksandr Zaveryukha, Yuriy Yarov, Vladimir Kinelev, Vitaliy Ignatenko, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov and Chairman of the State Property Committee Aleksandr Kazakov.

Russia: Primakov May Reshuffle Foreign Ministry Personnel

LD0202184596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1612 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Russia's new Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov may make some personnel changes in the Foreign Ministry, reliable sources in Moscow have said.

Radical reshuffles are unlikely, though, according to one of the sources.

The source said that the changes may affect the level of deputy ministers and directors of departments.

"Some deputy foreign ministers to those who have made careers in the central office are likely to be appointed ambassadors to foreign countries," INTERFAX was told.

The sources preferred to avoid mentioning any names, but disclosed that chiefs of diplomatic missions are likely to be replaced in several East European countries and in one country in the Caribbean.

According to the sources, personnel changes are likely in the European and U.S. departments.

One of the sources said that diplomatic circles did not over-dramatize likely personnel changes. "Each newly-appointed minister forms his own team. This is a quite explicable, routine procedure," he said.

The source did not rule out that the Foreign Ministry's staff may be complemented with new staff. "Primakov is likely to invite a dozen people close to him, who have accompanied him for a number of years and whom he can rely on," the source said. He recalled that Primakov's old-time aide Robert Markaryan had already been appointed chief of the Foreign Minister's Secretariat and that the Secretariat itself had been given the status of a department.

Russia: First Deputy Foreign Minister Appointed

LD0302121996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1205 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 3 (ITAR-TASS) — Boris Pastukhov has been appointed to a First Deputy Foreign Minister by the Russian President's Decree, said the presidential press service. To date Pastukhov worked as a Deputy Foreign Minister.

Yuriy Zubakov has been appointed to a Deputy Foreign Minister by another Presidential Decree.

Russia: President's Staff, Ambassador Appointments

MM0202203296 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA Weekend Edition in Russian 2 Feb 96 p 2

[Unattributed report under the "Officially" rubric: "By Edicts of the Russian Federation President"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Valeryan Nikolayevich Viktorov has been appointed deputy chief of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff and chief of the Russian

Federation President's Main Administration for Questions of State Domestic and Foreign Policy.

Abdulakh Kasbulatovich Mikitayev has been relieved of his duties as acting chairman of the Commission for Citizenship Questions Under the Russian Federation President.

Gennadiy Serafimovich Shikin has been relieved of his duties as Russian Federation ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in connection with his transfer to other work.

Yuriy Mikhaylovich Kotov has been appointed Russian Federation ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Gennadiy Viktorovich Ilichev has been relieved of his duties as Russian Federation ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Lebanese Republic in connection with his transfer to other work.

Oleg Gerasimovich Peresyvkin has been appointed Russian Federation ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Lebanese Republic.

Russia: Miners' Leaders Discuss Strike Situation

LD0202215696 Moscow NTV in Russian
2100 GMT 1 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast; passages within quotation marks recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The authorities have relieved themselves of any responsibility for the coal problem. [passage omitted] Vitaliy Budko, leader of the all-Russia strike, seems ready to agree to the government's promises. In his opinion, the miners could go back to work the day after tomorrow [3 February] after he meets with Deputy Prime Minister Kadannikov, who inherited the mining portfolio from Anatoliy Chubays.

[Vitaliy Budko, chairman of Russian Trade Union of Coal Industry Workers] "The question is: What today may influence miners to go back to work and halt their action? The first thing is: confirmation of a month-by-month schedule for financing the coal sector on the basis of the sum of 10 billion rubles. That is an important aspect, I stress, because this sum has been approved already by the president and by the prime minister of the government.

"The second very important question for us is the signing of a sector-wide agreement. This is an important document, on the basis of which we are working today and which regulates relations between the trade union and the government. And the third important question which we must resolve today is that consumers today owe us over (?63 billion rubles) and today all the money coming into enterprises' accounts immediately go to pay taxes. Therefore, we demand that 50 percent of the money coming into enterprises' accounts go to wages, and the rest can be taken for taxes." [passage omitted]

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia thinks that representatives of other sectors may join in the strike:

[Aleksey Surikov, first deputy chairman of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia] "Trade unions by their nature are not political structures. Our main function is to struggle for social and economic interests. We try not to initiate any political demands from above, but the trend today is such — and it can be seen clearly — that the longer the bodies of power of various levels fail to fulfill their promises and the longer they fail to find levers for alleviating and then improving the socio-economic situation in the country and of the main part of the population, the more political demands, such as no-confidence in authorities who are unable to lead the country out of the crisis, will be voiced from below."

The leadership of the coal industry recognizes that the demands of the miners are just, but at the same time, consider that the methods they are using to try to resolve their problems are unacceptable. The general director of the Rosugol [Russian coal] company thinks that the reason for the strike lies in the poor organization of the schedule for days off over the past month:

[Yuriy Malyshev, general director of Rosugol] "For half of the month, the whole country celebrated the Christmas holidays — apart from miners, and steel and energy workers, who worked, those who work round-the-clock. We cannot stop — otherwise the country will freeze — gas and oil workers. We all worked. The entire processing sector which pays taxes was at a standstill. Where taxes should be taken from February will be easier." [passage omitted]

At the same time, Aman Tuleyev, the best friend of the miners, who spoke to us today by telephone, thinks that the money is not reaching the miners for other reasons:

[Amangeldy Tuleyev, head of Kemerovo region administration] "I understand that there is not a lot of money. But the money which we allocate from the budget to the Rosugol company is being looted. Just 30 percent reaches the mines, 30 percent — the rest is hived off somewhere, in banks, commercial structures, [word indistinct] organizations, and so on and so forth."

Despite the fact the heads of practically all the vertical coal structures know about that, the trade unions consider the government, which should be answerable for everything, to be responsible for all the sector's troubles. Aman Tuleyev argues this position.

[Tuleyev] "Another trillion could be given to the Kuzbass. Well, so let's give another trillion — but what's the point? They will strike again in March. Why? Because the coal is lying around. Nobody needs the coal. The world price is one and a half times lower because railway prices for Kuzbass coal have been raised. So the Maritime Territory is buying coal from China. The Lipetsk steel works is buying coal from Poland. Coal is left in the Kuzbass. Nobody needs it. If it is lying around, it still needs to pay for itself, it needs to be extracted, then sold, and there won't be any money if it's not being sold, and that story will repeat itself again."

However, Vitaliy Budko assured us that the miners very frayed relations with the Cabinet of Ministers will not be used by the political opponents of the present authorities:

[Budko] "The trade unions are not a mouthpiece. We made our choice in 1991 when the following was recorded in the trade union rules: A leader of a trade union at any level does not have the right to be a member of any party. We are adhering to that position clearly today, but, just like anywhere else in Russian society, we have people who support Zhirinovskiy, the Communist Party, Gaydar, the president, and so on and so forth. Nevertheless, the trade union, as a single and monolithic structure, does not support anyone today, and moreover, it does not have the recommendation of any party, including the Communist Party."

At the same time, the Rosugol company issued a statement on 1 February condemning the strike. The leaders of the sector think that it may have destructive socio-economic consequences, responsibility for which will lie with trade union leaders. At the same time, the striking miners are being ignored, as it were.

[Leonid Gordon, professor institute of world economy, Russian Academy of Sciences] "The political consequences of that strike may be directly opposed to the consequences which the strike in 1989-1991 had. Then, the miners, and what followed the miners, broke the crest of totalitarianism. That situation of mass discontent, the wave of which may be swollen by that strike, incidentally, that wave may swell even more — of course, it is beneficial to, and is used in the first instance, by communist and pro-communist forces, that is, forces which imply a very serious danger of the transformations coming to a complete end."

So far, not a single party has responded to the nationwide coal strike. [passage omitted]

Russia: Decree Reforming Coal Industry 'Prepared'

LD0202193896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1808 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 2 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin's decree on structural reforms in the coal industry of the country has been prepared, Yuriy Shafranik, the Minister of Fuel and Power Engineering of Russia, said in his report to the State Duma (the lower house of Russian parliament) within the framework of "the government's hour" today.

He told the State Duma about the actions of the Cabinet of Ministers aimed at settling a collective labour dispute with the independent trade union of coal miners, and the normalisation of the situation in this branch of the economy.

The minister did not speak in detail about the future presidential decree but noted that this branch is "already now at the stage of reforms."

He informed in particular about the termination of extraction of coal in 37 unprofitable mines in different regions of the country. The elaboration of a complex programme of structural reforms in the coal branch is now at a final stage, the minister said.

Miners' strikes acquire a mass character at the beginning of every year when delays in wage payments arise, Shafranik noted.

According to him, "funds have been allocated for the full payments of wages to miners for January in conformity with the "strict assignment" to the government given by the president.

The minister also stated that "in the near future the government will redeem the indebtedness in wages to miners for the fourth quarter of the last year."

Shafranik urged deputies to consider once again as soon as possible the law "on coal" which the president had returned to parliament with his own "very serious remarks."

The minister believes that 140 coal mines to be closed "require a special approach and it will be difficult to resolve this problem without a corresponding legal basis."

Russia: Premier Signs Timetable To Fund Coal Industry

LD0302202296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1900 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin on Friday [2 February] signed a timetable for the funding of the coal industry during February and the rest of this year. The prime minister said that his first deputy, Vladimir Kadannikov, would soon sign a wages agreement with coal industry representatives, setting out basic pay rates for miners.

Russia: Trade Union Calls Off Coal Miners Strike

LD0302074096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
0737 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Grigoriy Shalakin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KEMEROVO, February 3 (ITAR-TASS) — The Trade Union of Coal Mining Industry resolved to call off miners's strike last night. However, despite the resolution coal production has not been fully restored in the Kuznetsk coal field. Throughout Saturday, coal shipments to consumers will be behind schedule. Around 3,400 freight cars of coal will be dispatched today instead of 4,550 as had been previously scheduled.

Deputy Head of the Kemerovo railway Vladimir Kolmogorov told ITAR-TASS that shipments had been halted at the Tyrgan and Prokopyevsk railway stations since coal enterprises had not ordered freight cars either for Saturday or Sunday. It means that over a dozen coal enterprises do not intend to work to full capacity, although the federal authorities have taken all the necessary measures to quickly repay debts to the miners and make state reimbursements to the coal mining industry this year.

Russia: Ex-Yeltsin Aide Views Life Inside Kremlin

LD0402223796 Moscow NTV in Russian
1800 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Summary] On the "Itogi" program, Vyacheslav Kostikov, former press secretary of the president of Russia and now ambassador of Russia to the Vatican, is interviewed for 10-minutes in the Vatican by NTV special correspondent Irina Zaytseva about his new book on life in the Kremlin which is being serialized by the weekly newspaper ARGUMENTY I FAKTY. Asked if he thought the president would like the book, Kostikov replies: "I think that what they tell the president about the book will set the him against it. They will say the book is anti-presidential, is such-and-such, that Kostikov has betrayed him".

Kostikov continues: "Yeltsin cannot conceive himself without power or outside power. He has very strong habits of power, sometimes even crossing the border of judicious ethics. Unfortunately, some of his entourage encourages him to act like this because one can often hear in the presidential entourage when they are trying to talk him out of something the sentence: Well, Boris Nikolayevich, that's not the sort of thing a czar does. Unfortunately, when such a phrase is repeated often, day in and day out, a person loses the ability to look at himself critically".

The correspondent quotes Kostikov as saying that there was a group of aides composed of Yuriy Baturin, Georgiy Satarov, Aleksandr Livshits, Mikhail Krasnov, and others who helped the president, trying to save him from blows. However, "a group of aides, analysts, people skilled in politics draw up one solution and then the president makes a quite different decision, but one does not know on the basis of what arguments or with whose help. I got the impression that recently something bad is happening with the president's information. Either he has less time to familiarize himself with it or the information is being distorted or twisted in one direction or another, in the direction needed by a group of people who are close to the president," Kostikov continues.

Speaking of those in the president's entourage, Kostikov says of presidential security advisor Aleksandr Korzhakov: "Korzhakov, in the Russian tradition of the Russian gentry, there were always relations between the gentleman and manservant. Korzhakov, under Yeltsin, feels himself to be a manservant who can bring his slippers, eat soup and drink vodka with him and in the interval say what he thinks about articles in newspapers and bring in a person which perhaps should not have been brought in to Boris Nikolayevich. You know this is a tradition of Russian political culture. This sort of ways of Troyekurov," a character in Pushkin work, "have always been there in power and are still there. And I don't want to say anything bad about the president by this but the president is also living like the Russian gentleman Troyekurov beside the president who is a democrat."

The correspondent quotes Korzhakov as saying that it would be difficult for the president to take his leave of Korzhakov. Speaking of the recent departures from the presidential council of some of members recently, Kostikov said: "I was very concerned — to be honest, I simply did not sleep that night when I heard the news that Sergey Sergeyevich Alekseyev had resigned. He was one of the most devoted in the presidential entourage and at the same time one of the purest. He was a moral authority of the highest caliber. Alekseyev, perhaps after Sakharov, upheld lofty morals among many of those who were around the president. Was Alekseyev there? He was. Was Kovalev there? He was. We are with the president."

Speaking of Sergey Filatov's departure from the presidential entourage, Kostikov says: "There was a very complex triangle of confrontation in the president's entourage, a battle to influence the president — between Korzhakov, Filatov, and first aide Viktor Ilyushin. That situation in which people struggle to be closest to the president is a very unhealthy one — in any event there was a constant and exhausting struggle between these three people. Filatov did not initiate it but it seems to me that Filatov was often put in an awkward position before the president who interpreted his actions in one way or another."

The correspondent says: "Speaking of the ease with which the president takes his leave of people who are true to him, the author analyzed this specifically in his book". Kostikov responds: "It seems to me that is connected with the fact that Boris Nikolayevich has an ideology of his own. He does not have democratic convictions of his own. He never has. He grew up in a certain system of power. He is a man of power. By his character he is without a doubt a man who is able to and who likes to dominate and his ideology, if you like, his friend, his concubine, his lover, his passion is power. And everything which is outside the struggle for power is of much less concern to him.

"In my view, essentially, Boris Nikolayevich does not have any genuine, deep political friends, and the further things go, the greater the danger lies in this now on the threshold of the forthcoming elections. Sometimes Boris Nikolayevich seems a tragically lonely man, especially now that democrats, who strictly speaking themselves made Yeltsin who he is, are distancing themselves from him. And Yeltsin made them democrats," Kostikov continues.

"If President Yeltsin becomes president for a second term, I can understand that under the force of circumstances, under the pressure of the opposition, democracy will slowly retreat one step forward, two steps back. But let's say, if others, if the communists come to power, that will be it — democracy will collapse within a few weeks. I think that in order to guarantee an organized retreat of democracy and to then prepare a counterattack, Boris Nikolayevich could be useful," Kostikov concludes.

Russia: New Duma Deputy Speaker Interviewed

MM0202171196 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 4

[Interview with Mikhail Gutseriyev, deputy chairman of Russian Federation State Duma, by unidentified correspondent under the "Personal File" rubric; place and date not given: "If It Is More Profitable To Hide Money in the Country Than To Pay Taxes, This Means That the Laws Are To Blame, Not People"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mikhail Safarbekovich Gutseriyev was born in the international city of Tselinograd, the Kazakh SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic], in 1958.

An inhabitant of the virgin lands from the cradle. Maybe this is why he is never afraid to start something on the bare steppe or on a clean sheet of paper.

In 1981 he graduated from Dzhambul Technological Institute. His profession as a chemical-process engineer and healthy personal ambitions brought him in 1986 to the esteemed post of general director of the Arts and Crafts Production Association in the city of Groznyy, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR [Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic].

Perestroyka in the Caucasus coincided with the growth of the shadow economy and with wild privatization. Gutseriyev would hardly have arrived in Moscow in 1992 without money and experience acquired in the early stage of Caucasian capitalism.

According to very diverse ratings the modest "BIN" Bank, which he set up in 1993, is today characterized by a quite high level of reliability.

He regards the rebirth of his native Ingushetia as his life's work: Since 1994 he has headed the administration of Russia's first Economic Development Zone.

In December 1995 he was elected a State Duma deputy on the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] list, and in January of this year vice speaker of the Duma.

He is married with three children.

[IZVESTIYA] Mikhail Safarbekovich, in the Presidium of the new Duma you proved to be the least known person for journalists and, also incidentally, for the voters who voted for the LDPR party list. You were no. 6 after Zhirinovskiy....

[Gutseriyev] You know what angered me: One Moscow newspaper carried a report that some Caucasian had bought a seat in parliament from Zhirinovskiy for $1 million, and the post of vice speaker into the bargain.

[IZVESTIYA] But no one will believe that you did not help to finance the LDPR election campaign.

[Gutseriyev] We still suffer from a communist syndrome: If someone has given money, it means he has given a bribe. The administration of the Economic Development Zone helps the Moscow Patriarchate. This is a noble cause — the rebuilding of churches. But if we helped not one but five blocs during the election campaign, what is this? The development of the multiparty system in a democratic state.

All this is permitted by law in Russia now, as in other normal countries. Legal financing of parties and candidates is lobbying for the interests of certain economic, social, and political groups — nothing else has been thought of in democratic countries. But in communist countries people achieve their ends by means of secret bribes. As a very young politician, I shall leave unanswered for now your quick counter question — in what kind of country, then, are we living today? — but I will look for the answer with the help of new draft laws.

[IZVESTIYA] You will have to start from scratch in the Duma, for you are a completely new person there. I could even say a new type of person.

[Gutseriyev] The people who are in the Duma now have totally inadequate ideas about me. I do not mean that I am a big figure, but there are things in Russia which were done first by us, when no one else was doing them: the first commercial bank in Checheno-Ingushetia, the building of the first joint venture with the Italians in 1988, the first free economic zone, which worked, and much besides. I do not have any special ambitions, but since I have now gone into politics, people must know who is who, as Gorbachev said.

I have entered the Duma to gain experience and to tackle lawmaking, particularly as I had already been directly involved in the drafting of four laws adopted by the previous Duma. A whole block of problems relating to the territorial rehabilitation of repressed peoples is near to me. A large package of state documents relating to the fate of Ingushetia was prepared along with Ruslan Aushev, a serious president and politician.

But, on coming into the Duma, I heard a deputy say that it was necessary to check out whether Gutseriyev knew how to conduct sessions, i.e., it was necessary to see whether this bear knew how to press buttons. A normal person does not have to put up with such humiliation. Hitherto I had considered myself a man with three children growing up, who had built several houses and several plants and even received a commission from President Aushev to build a whole city. Thousands of people had worked under my leadership.

[IZVESTIYA] What are your impressions from the first days of work in the Federal Assembly's lower chamber?

[Gutseriyev] Committees and commissions are now being formed in the Duma. As a practical worker not experienced in politics, my observations are unusual: All deputies fight to get on the Committee for the Budget — the Duma version of the Ministry of Finance! And yet this budget is shaped by the development of the economy: industry, transport, power generation, construction. But no one is keen to go there. This indicates that everyone wants a share of the pie, but they have no desire to think or to work to increase it.

"Summon Kinelev to the Duma and ask him why wages are not being paid in St. Petersburg's higher educational institutions" — but no one goes to the Committee on Education.

Let us create a legislative base for construction, trade, communications, and transportation, so that it pays people to engage in production, not brokerage, and then the budget will fill up.

Approximately 40 people in the Duma have expressed a wish to work on the Defense Committee, and just two on the Culture Committee. I am staggered. I do not yet know any latent political trends and decisions — these are the first days of the Duma's work. But why are the people's elected representatives so undiscriminating with regard to the priorities of our life?

[IZVESTIYA] Which committee do you prefer?

[Gutseriyev] I am interested in industry and high-technology sectors, and I would like to influence the foundations of our life and bring them to a favorable denominator.

[IZVESTIYA] In their campaigning zeal deputies of the present convocation gave out too many promises to raise the living standards of socially vulnerable sections.

[Gutseriyev] The people will not get an easier life because of the redistribution of property, as in 1917, or because of the budget in 1996. I thank Yeltsin and Gaydar for their courage in adopting complex decisions on market development, but what is needed today is a new original program of further economic reforms which take into account great Russia's regional features and the mentality of the peoples who populate it. Most importantly, they must take into account the fact that one Russian in two today is poor. I am ready to present such a program to the public in the form of a draft law no later than May.

[IZVESTIYA] Do you approach the problem as a politician or a capitalist?

[Gutseriyev] These concepts are inseparable, since they are both "mixed up" with interests. It would not hurt everyone in our country to look at life the way a proprietor, a private owner would. All that is needed is consistent, sensible steps. The tax on the upper wages limit, for example, was abolished as of the new year. This is a very correct step, one which will enable enterprises not to hide wages but to give up income tax honestly and, incidentally, make deductions into the pension fund.

Where else is money hidden? How is it to be obtained? Everyone knows but is afraid to say, so as not to lose his political reputation. And yet it is all simple: Approach the problem the way a private owner would. Then people will stop understating prices at auctions to sell state share packages in order to oblige incompetent but well-known politicians out of fear that foreigners will buy up everything (they buy it up through straw men just the same).

[IZVESTIYA] You criticize the collective passion for getting into the Duma's ministry of finance, but surely, as a former banker, you would like to change something in relations between the Russian individual and the ruble?

[Gutseriyev] There are obvious things here — the cash taken out of circulation, the monthly wage, not to mention the stocking containing currency. How are we fighting this now? The state issues securities, and the big commercial banks are trying to organize their own cashless clearing systems — credit cards. Why reinvent the wheel? The state program for a cashless payment system will resolve this problem, will enable us to integrate ourselves in the world cashless clearing system, and will ensure a saving without a big investment.

[IZVESTIYA] You speak of painful problems as lightly as though you were a foreigner.

[Gutseriyev] Why? I was born here and was "baptized" here. I am 37. While others were selling diamonds, oil, and gold, ruining their descendants down to the third generation, I was printing school exercise books for Russia, and I allocated $7 million to a brilliant project which has already been implemented: the alternative "Step by Step" textbooks in all school subjects for all classes for the whole country and even for the CIS states.

We are working in Russia and for Russia. I have a reliable bank, factories, a four-star hotel with the best European equipment, dozens of stores, a club, supermarkets, insurance companies, transport, trading, timber, and wine plants, shares in an oil company....

[IZVESTIYA] You turned up in Moscow four years ago and took on almost 2,000 people in, as you say, the state of "BIN," and they are working to this day, not to mention the thousands upon thousands of people employed in carrying out your construction projects, including the international business center in Moscow.

[Gutseriyev] The firm "BIN" was thought up by young people and set up by several people who are close in spirit. I am the oldest at 37, and the bank's president is 23 — probably the youngest bank president in Russia. This is Russia's future, unspoiled by the Komsomol, communism, fear, anything.... People who have been rich from childhood and who have not been degraded by poverty. They do not ask their mom for three rubles to buy ice cream for a girl but are already earning serious money and paying big taxes to society.

Or take Yevgeniy Marchenko, the 28-year-old head of the administration of the "Ingushetiya" Economic Development Zone. True, this is his public post, but, in addition, he is also president of the major "BIN" financial corporation and of the "BIN" consortium of enterprises.

They fear nothing and no one. They believe in this country. They are people without a fear syndrome, they are the natural entrepreneurs who for 70 years were rooted out in our country. But they would, of course, find things difficult without the wisdom and experience of the specialists who are always at hand (Dr. of Economic Sciences M.A. Khaldin, Candidate of Juridical Sciences D.Ye. Yanson, Candidate of Juridical Sciences G.M. Glinkina).

[IZVESTIYA] You shrewdly joined Zhirinovskiy's party and were no. 6 on the LDPR list, because you believed in its unconditional success and its surmounting of the 5-percent barrier, although, as you say, many parties and blocs asked for financial support and you helped a lot of them. But along with the party mandate you assumed obligations also to support the LDPR platform, which is built on imperial ambitions and populist slogans, on the Russian idea reduced to fascistization....

[Gutseriyev] First, about fascism — it does not exist, for the press invented it, hyperbolizing it into Zhirinovskiy's statements.

Strong Russia? What is bad about that? I also advocate a strong Russian state, not a second-rate power for whose peasants English schoolchildren have set aside humanitarian aid out of their lunch boxes.

Why did I join? Because saying and doing are two different things. Everyone remembers the bloodshed that was the price paid for the ideas of internationalism in Afghanistan, but the "sacred ideas" of fraternal internationalism have still not been debunked. The Communists spoke of equality and fraternity, but equality never existed.

Let us now take a look at the democrats' equality and fraternity. Democracy for 10 leaders, 20 banks, three

oblasts? I am not talking of Chechnya.... Zhirinovskiy talks, let us say, about the peoples' unequal rights, but he does not lay out "persons of Caucasian nationality" face down in the mud today or conduct a census of their children in schools while speaking of the equality of all peoples in Russia.

For myself, I have determined the chief thing — there is no blood on the LDPR, and if such a thing happens I will not remain in such a party for a single day. Ideas can be transformed by the reality of life. It was Nietzsche who answered his opponents by saying that a philosopher brings forth his own convictions and wears them out, but what can be said about ordinary citizens? A spirit which is not allowed to replace convictions ceases to be a spirit.

In general, in my view, too many mistakes have been made in our country and too many crimes have been committed because of iron principles. France recently paid its last respects to its great citizen Mitterrand, who was a genius at compromise. With its bloody history Russia has now won the right to compromise, to agreement and accord among diverse political forces.

[IZVESTIYA] What privileges did you receive on becoming vice speaker?

[Gutseriyev] The privilege of working. I have all the rest. Maybe another privilege — that of not being humiliated. Now, hopefully, the defender of law and order will not stop me in the street to mock me: "Why have you, a Caucasian, come here? Just follow me to the police station to ascertain your identity. We will get to the bottom of it."

[IZVESTIYA] Are you a rich man?

[Gutseriyev] I am proud of this, not ashamed, as used to be the custom. I can help people to buy a piano for their children, to dress well, and to look at the world as a whole family, and I can organize new jobs and make hundreds of people happy by rescuing them from unemployment.

[IZVESTIYA] Society will not part so easily from its age-old conviction that the poor man is a highly spiritual, upright, and just citizen, while the rich man is always unjust. Although, incidentally, the communist-capitalists will help here. There are said to be almost 20 billionaires in the Communists' Duma faction.

[Gutseriyev] I do not know. I had dealings with the Communists, and I was an activist, a Communist, a secretary, and a bureau member. Everyone curses Gaydar, but how quickly everyone has forgotten what things were like seven years ago. I was general director of a sewn goods association, and with what horror I recall how two suites of furniture were raffled among a collective of 1,000. Some women were prepared to give up everything to obtain scarce goods. There was a rayon soviet executive committee commission, drawing of lots in each of the shops, and a long, long chain of lines and humiliations. And someone wants to demonstrate to me that communist ideas are good.

They raffled a car, and then spent a year investigating 50 anonymous letters. They distributed preserving jar lids in the trade union committee, as though they were fighting at the Kursk Bulge. Have you forgotten? How quickly this has been forgotten by the millions who cast their votes for the Communists this time. The Communists will come along, and then we will remember Yeltsin and Gaydar, who created the possibility of filling the country with goods.

The most terrible thing is human humiliation. The most important thing is human freedom. A person must not be humiliated by poverty and lack of rights, must not go to bed and get up humiliated and deprived. Poverty is not a vice, but poverty breeds vice. Great Russian literature was created not by Volga bargees but by hereditary nobles.

Let the Communists exist as a civilized party, and new ideas be born in the struggle of opposites. In general, the Communists are needed so that the democrats do not doze but pursue their reforms more vigorously.

My viewpoint is that the democrats in Russia might be replaced by social democrats or liberal democrats, but never by Communists and Nazis.

[IZVESTIYA] A very impassioned and bitter question: How do you see the Chechen crisis being resolved?

[Gutseriyev] I know Chechnya and the Chechens probably better than anyone in the Duma. For I have worked in Groznyy. These people have a special mentality and a special destiny, and they have repeatedly been oppressed. We must treat with particular caution people whose history has turned out like this. But I have repeated and will repeat that Chechnya has no destiny without Russia. Devastated Chechnya is an anomaly, but terrorist Chechnya is doubly an anomaly. No violence can be justified by great aims.

Churchill said that Stalin was a great figure: He took a country with a wooden plow and left it with an atom bomb. How many millions of human lives were sacrificed in the name of that? Like savages, we are continuing to feed the Moloch of war on a most incredible sacrifice — our colleagues in intellect. There is no idea in the world that is more important than a single specific human life.

[IZVESTIYA] Was Yeltsin right when he said: Take as much sovereignty as you can?

[Gutseriyev] We Ingush took it, and we have our own destiny. Ingushetia is part of Russia, aid comes, and cadres come, and no one will convince me that it is not free. No one tells you not to believe in Allah, or not to dance the lezginka. No one tells you to build hog farms in villages, but in communist times such an order even cost the life of one party secretary.

I cannot make an assessment of the Chechen events, for I am still too young for this as a politician and a man. But I know that no war has yet created anything and that any war ends in peace. When peace comes there, it will be one of the happiest days of my life — there will be no war in Russia.

[IZVESTIYA] Mikhail Safarbekovich, it is a well-known fact, but I will repeat it: A group of well-known innovative Russian pedagogues went round all the major banks, asking them to support the publication of alternative and additional school textbooks. They all refused, but you allocated $7 million to a project which is becoming an object of national pride.

[Gutseriyev] What is money invested in today? In diamonds, gold, fur coats and diamond jewelry for women, houses, yachts, and various social gatherings. What do they want with schools and children? But children today are the people tomorrow. They — the very children to whom we do not want to give money today for textbooks and exercise books — will come along tomorrow to rob these very bankers. The schoolteachers are dispersing, their wages suffice only for a travel ticket for all forms of transport, which now costs 180,000 rubles in Moscow. Who will the schools produce if the professionals are leaving them? We will again produce a generation of people who are only able to subtract and not multiply. Everything in life is interconnected: Things will be good in my family when my entrance hall is kept clean, our school is interesting, my city is safe, and our country is peaceful and replete.

[IZVESTIYA] Here is a question that is indelicate for a banker but essential for someone who has voluntarily stepped out into the public political arena: What is the source of your capital? After Dudayev came to power, did you leave Groznyy for Moscow with ideas and money?

[Gutseriyev] Both money and ideas. It is an open secret today that the current privatization process started in the Caucasus in the second half of the eighties. In 1988 I created one of the first cooperative banks, the first Soviet-Italian joint venture — a furniture factory in Checheno-Ingushetia — the first business house, and the first private enterprise. When I went to Siberia, to Achinsk, in 1989 to buy or lease several hundred hectares of forest land in order to start exploiting them, I took with me a full package of documents for the IChP [expansion unknown], and the first secretary looked at me at the time as though I were mad. How could this private enterprise organize a forestry establishment! I wanted to do everything myself — fell, cut up, and saw timber myself and make the furniture for which the whole country was standing in one huge line, warming itself at night fires and ticking off numbers.

I am now proud of that experience. You can start up any firm now without problems, but at that time you had to surmount the tremendous inertia of resistance.

[IZVESTIYA] Tell me, are there any security problems in your life? Do bodyguards accompany your every step?

[Gutseriyev] No, I personally have never had, do not have, and will not have any. My family is a different matter....

I am not afraid because I have never stolen anything from anyone and never deceived anyone, and I owe no one anything. First I would negotiate with my feet firmly on the ground [snachala dogovarivalsya na beregu], and if I reached agreement I always fulfilled the contract — why should I fear? I did not poke my nose into other people's business, did not take over other people's factories, and did not privatize state property very cheaply, as many people contrived to do. I want to live and work in my own country and my own motherland. I want to see Russia as a country whose opinion is reckoned with throughout the world and, accordingly, I want Russia to reckon with the opinion of its citizens and with my personal opinion.

Russia: Zyuganov Seen Trying To Calm Western Investors

MK0302125296 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Mikhail Leontyev: "Catastrophe With a Human Face"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Zyuganov demonstrated in the World Economic Forum the human face at the existence of which he hinted both shortly before his maiden trip to Switzerland and earlier, in meetings with Western officials.

Mr. Zyuganov confirmed that "a return to state monopoly is impossible" and that the West should rest assured on this score. He promised to create a stable climate for foreign investors.

There is nothing unusual in these statements. Furthermore, Mr. Zyuganov has historical precedents to lean on, including the NEP [New Economic Policy], for which today's Communists periodically have affection. Nor should we seriously regard the statements by the liberal Economy Minister Yevgeniy Yasin, who billed Mr. Zyuganov as a visual aid on political guarantees to foreign investors. Mr. Yasin stated that the main factions in the Russian parliament, ranging from left-wing to right-wing, recognize the usefulness of foreign capital, and that the Russian economy, fortunately, is only partially dependent on politics.

What Mr. Yasin said in Davos was certainly in line of duty: His mission is to pacify rather than frighten away investors. All the more so because should public anti-Communist hysterical statements come from the West, they would only do a service to the Communists.

As for the NEP precedents, as well as the experiments of Stalin's industrialization and even the post-Stalin modernization, we can only state that there are no resources at all for the first, second or third.

Any Russian authority will face the main and principle problem: that of guaranteeing conditions for economic growth. Incidentally, the Communists more than others are inclined to make much of the idea of growth, "restoration" of the industrial potential, and so on. Growth, however, calls for investment (be it internal or external), while the absolutely essential condition for it is the "dumping" [sbros; it is unclear what meaning the writer is attaching to this word] of the social sphere. It would be very interesting to see how the Communists are going to handle this task.

Today's Communist voter is socially hungry, and all of the Communists' strength lies in "class-based" voting driven by hatred for offenders and oppressors. Furthermore, the current Communist party is not social democratic at all. This is a party of Communist revenge regardless of individual leaders' personal abilities of mimicry and opportunism. The proletarian wing inside the Communist Party of the Russian Federation is greater than it is outside it, and Mr. Zyuganov knows very well how short is the leash on which Anpilov is holding him. Today's Communists have exhausted the options for drifting toward the "right" because if they "detach themselves from the masses" they will immediately turn into electoral dummies of the Rybkin type. Gennadiy Zyuganov is pragmatic and ambitious enough to, on one hand, secretly wish to be "a little bit like Rybkin" and, on the other, avoid stepping on the latter's rake.

The Communists only have their own exclusive method of "dumping" the social sphere: the camp or a system of camps of various ranks built one inside the other. I would hate to accuse Gennadiy Zyuganov personally of predilection for such decisions, but Russia lacks resources even for doing this much.

Thus, the coming to power of the Communists spells a catastrophe — not only for the country but also for themselves. There will be no winners in the wake of a Communist victory; there will only be victims. Mr. Zyuganov is only wasting his time going to Davos unless he is fearing he may win and looks around for a spot for himself at the Swiss health resorts. Were this not the case, why go to Davos? [Chinese President] Jiang Zemin, for example, does not go there.

Russia: Lebed Interviewed on Politics, Chechnya

LD0402220396 Moscow NTV in Russian
1800 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Interview with Aleksandr Lebed, former commander of the Russian 14th Army, by Aleksandr Shashkov, in Moscow; date not given — live or recorded; from the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Shashkov] Aleksandr Ivanovich, are you sure you will be a good president?

[Lebed] Absolutely. I like people, that's probably the main thing. You won't find a single man in the airborne assault troops or in the land troops who could complain that I had ever insulted him, or not heard him out. You won't find anyone. Why ask a question like that?

[Shashkov] But Aleksandr Ivanovich, I've heard that [Defense Minister Pavel] Grachev was actually a very good commander, he was very much liked in the division.

[Lebed] Yes, he was a good division commander.

[Shashkov] And what sort of a defense minister has he turned out to be, in your view?

[Lebed] Middling, to put it bluntly.

[Shashkov] Are you not worried that having been a good commander, you might turn out to be a middling president?

[Lebed] That doesn't worry me. I don't think I shall be middling.

[Shashkov] In the run-up to the presidential elections, experts and journalists are distinguishing two categories of politicians — the nationalists, along with those for a strong state [derzhavnik], with whom some representatives of the current federal authorities are forming alliances, and the communists. Which of these two is closer to you?

[Lebed] Those for a strong state, probably.

[Shashkov] Aleksandr Ivanovich, your main rivals in the elections, according to the latest polls, are President Yeltsin, Gennadiy Zyuganov, the representative of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Could you give a short sketch of your opponents, that is, your rivals?

[Lebed] In principle, I can. Frankly, Gennadiy Andreyevich has difficulties. First, the Communist Party does not accept presidential power in principle, and the party has not put into the party rules a paragraph about taking part in the elections for the president of the Russian Federation. (?The Ministry of Justice) saw to it that correct use was made of the absence of such a paragraph. Today there are three candidates — Zyuganov, [Petr] Romanov, [Aman] Tuleyev, but none of them from the Communist Party, all through initiative groups. And the legitimate question arises as to why, first, there are seven communist parties in the country. And a second question is why the national communist party which was so recently voted in has three candidates, but none of them directly from it. And why three and not one anyway?

Grigoriy Alekseyevich has difficulties, which were demonstrated during the elections for speaker: there were 56 votes, none from the right nor the left. If you add those 56 votes to another group, then it would be a serious matter, but 56 on their own cannot play a role.

Vladimir Volfovich, I suppose, is making use of these elections simply to earn a bit of money, that's the sort he is.

Boris Nikolayevich has difficulties, too, of all sorts — health, Budennovsk, Chubays. The head of foreign intelligence is straightaway redesignated as foreign minister, and we showed the whole world that we understood the two things to be the same thing. From foreign intelligence to foreign affairs!

All of them have their difficulties, and it's up to them how they tackle them.

I have my own difficulties, too. I think we shall sort things out, in a civilized way.

[Shashkov] In the run-up to the presidential elections, Chechnya has in effect become a trump card. Do you think it is possible to stop the war in Chechnya now?

[Lebed] The war in Chechnya can be stopped right now, but the forces of the army, the Federal Security Service, the Interior Ministry should not be used to tackle a non-military problem — a non-military problem, I stress. The problem is an economic one, first and foremost, then a political one, and only then a military problem. The keys to resolving this problem lie here in Moscow; the situation down there is stalemate, it has to be tackled here, in Moscow. It's simply to do with oil pipelines, through Chechnya and bypassing Chechnya, and it's no accident the two settlements of Budennovsk and Kizlyar were picked out. They were already fixed in the subconscious as being dangerous, bad, because they are right on the route.

[Shashkov] But what means can be used to resolve the problem? Make the oil pipeline go round Chechnya, or take another route?

[Lebed] Economic means. You can't work like that. I have a specific education. You're not just an ordinary person, you're a correspondent, we're surrounded by cameras here, and I leap in saying what I shall do and how. Someone hears and afterwards you can throw the plan into the wastepaper basket. That's not the way things are done.

[Shashkov] In the case at issue, do you regard the military operation in Chechnya unnecessary or impossible?

[Lebed] Unnecessary. What do you mean, impossible? Everything is possible. A quarter of our country are former spetsnaz [special purpose] forces, former Interior Ministry servicemen, marines — everyone can do everything.

[Shashkov] So why did the operation in Pervomayskoye fail?

[Lebed] It was stalemate. How was it possible to break through a triple blockade — and not just break through, but to get away taking along more than 60 hostages? Is there something else here?

[Shashkov] What?

[Lebed] A corridor was left open. Who left it, why, in agreement with whom — these are all interesting questions.

[Shashkov] Do you know the answers to them?

[Lebed] In part.

[Shashkov] Can you tell us?

[Lebed] No.

[Shashkov] During the events in Pervomayskoye, you offered the president your services in directing the operation. Can you reveal your plan now, can you say how you would have acted in that situation?

[Lebed] It's pointless. In the first place, the president did not respond at all, with either yes or no. And second, everyone has their own strategy, seeing the fighting from outside. To wave one's hands now and say if I had been the director things would have been different is simply improper towards those who fought there, who were wounded or lost their lives there. One should not behave in that way.

[Shashkov] Aleksandr Ivanovich, how do you feel in the Duma?

[Lebed] Comfortable, on the whole — comfortable. I'm getting used to things.

[Shashkov] You have now joined the Power to the People [narodovlastiye] group. The media rushed this out as a sensation.

[Lebed] This is all considerably simpler than it seemed to some. A number of legislative ideas put forward by deputies of this group simply attracted my attention. They are very diverse people. There are [Eduard] Rossel-supporters, communists, billionaires, all sorts of people. It is simply an interesting group. They do indeed have ideas, they first have to be implemented. When you implement something, you have to bear in mind there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.

[Shashkov] Thank you, Aleksandr Ivanovich.

Russia: Democratic Union Against Reopening Leader's File

LD0202161396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — The leaders of the Democratic Union of Russia described in a statement received by INTERFAX Friday the intention declared by Moscow Federal Security Service chief Anatoliy Trofimov to reopen the case against party leader Valeriya Novodvorskaya as an attempt at creating the impression that the agency is doing some anti-terrorism work.

Lt. Gen. Trofimov told the collegium meeting of the Moscow prosecutor's office Wednesday that the case started against Novodvorskaya in January 1995 could be reopened. The case was closed last September, with strong help from former acting prosecutor general Aleksey Ilyushenko, Trofimov said.

Trofimov said that a record of a telephone conversation between Novodvorskaya and a supporter of Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev in Moscow was sent to the prosecutor's office on August 2, 1995. According to Trofimov, Novodvorskaya said she supported the terrorist attack in Budennovsk and called for staging similar attacks throughout Russia, bombing defense factories and vital services and taking more hostages.

The Democratic Union leaders said in the statement, "It is only the Federal Security Service (FSB), which tried to sell the public a story about Chechens fleeing Pervomayskoye barefoot and all Chechens being killers, robbers and thieves, that could also offer society a theory under which Shamil Basayev and his followers, all professional soldiers, need advice from Russian civil rights activists who are by no means military experts and never held arms in their hands."

"Security officers do not make a secret of the fact that they illegally tap telephones of political figures, they boast about it," the statement said. On the other hand, "professional dissidents know how easy the KGB could put together the record it needed from parts of ten conversations in which whatever does not fit the story told by special services is deleted," Democratic Union leaders argue.

The Democratic Union is "amazed by the fact that the FSB intends to invoke Article 70-I of the Criminal Code, public calls to commit state crimes, while they have only a telephone talk, faked at that, to go on."

Russia: Finance Ministry Approves Issue of Bonds

LD0202221396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2057 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 2 (ITAR-TASS) — The Russian Finance Ministry has approved the schedule for the fourth issue of government bonds, the ministry's spokesman told ITAR-TASS on Friday.

The issue is to start on February 28, 1996.

A total of 4,000,000 bonds, worth one trillion roubles, will be issued for one year of circulation, of which 2,500,000 are to sell at a face value of 100,000 roubles and 150,000 at 500,000 roubles.

Military Issues

Russia: Units To Reinforce Tajik-Afghan Border Troops

LD0502093196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0808 GMT 5 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Boris Kipkeyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 5 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — In spite of shelling on posts and outposts and repeated attempts by rebels to break into the territory of Tajikistan from Afghanistan, the situation of the Russian troops in Tajikistan is "now generally stable." A spokesman for the Russian federal border service told an ITAR-TASS correspondent today that the border troops were completely coping with their task.

He said, however, that there were reports on a drastic increase in rebel activities in the Khorog and Shurobad area. The spokesman said after a recent meeting in Dushanbe between heads of Russia's power-wielding ministries and Tajikistan's leadership that a plan was now being drafted to reinforce protection on the Tajik-Afghan border. In particular, it is planned to reinforce the border troops with units from the Russian Defense Ministry.

Russia: Suchkov To Fill In as Acting BSF Chief

MK0302134996 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 3

[NEGA report: "Crimea"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In line with the Russian Federation president's decree, the duties of Eduard Baltin, dismissed Black Sea Fleet [BSF] Commander, will be temporarily performed by his first deputy, Vice Admiral Gennadiy Suchkov. According to competent sources, Suchkov's assumption of this position does not suit some high-ranking persons in the Black Sea Fleet command. They prefer to see Vice Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, first deputy Baltic Fleet commander, in this position. In the words of an officer who wished to remain unnamed, Kravchenko served in the Black Sea Fleet for a long time, "he is distinguished for high professionalism and his love of Russia, something that cannot be said about Gennadiy Suchkov."

Russia: Discrepancy in Baltin Dismissal Reports Viewed

MM0502104396 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Nikolay Musiyenko: "Who Is Boss in the House"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Truly, in Russia's leading circles the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. By the left hand I mean the State Duma while by the right I mean the man "elected by all the people...."

I have before me two ITAR-TASS reports. The first, dated 31 January, states that the State Duma deputies "have admitted today that they were too hasty in adopting some of the chamber's decrees." They had in mind in particular the Duma decree protesting the resignation of Admiral Eduard Baltin, commander of the Black Sea Fleet. The reason for this admission was the speech delivered to deputies by Mikhail Surkov, deputy chairman of the Duma Defense Committee. He said that on the basis of information received by this committee at the Russian Federation president's state legal administration and in a personal conversation with E. Baltin "the admiral has not been dismissed from his post and is continuing to perform his duties." The second note, issued a day later, says that by a Russian Federation presidential edict dated 27 January (note that date) Baltin was dismissed from his post and Defense Minister Pavel Grachev has sent a telegram to Sevastopol demanding that the admiral hand over his affairs within 10 days to Vice Admiral Gennadiy Suchkov, first deputy commander of the Black Sea Fleet.

It remains for us to guess whether the presidential structures deliberately misled the deputies or whether it "just happened."

Something else is clear: Boris Yeltsin has yet again demonstrated "who is boss in the house" and has made it clear that as before he has no intention of considering the opinion of the legislators or the interests of his own state's security.

Russia: Kolesnikov Defends Transfer of Airborne Troops

MM0502124296 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "No One Intends To Wind Up Airborne Troops"]

[FBIS Translated Text] An order issued by Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian defense minister, on transferring four separate Airborne Troop brigades stationed on the territory of the North Caucasus, Siberian, Transbaykal, and Far East Military Districts directly to the jurisdiction of the commanders of these districts came into force 1 February. Henceforth five divisions and four airborne brigades, including the Tula and Ulyanovsk Airborne Divisions, are left under the direct command of the commander in chief of the Airborne Troops.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI was told by Army General Mikhail Kolesnikov, chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, that this decision is designed to boost the troops' combat capability.

But State Duma deputies did not approve the defense minister's decision and urged the Russian president not to rush to decide the fate of the Airborne Troops. However, the Duma members soon saw reason and acknowledged publicly that they had been hasty in adopting the document. Mikhail Surkov, deputy chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee, said that the parliamentarians should not have overdramatized the situation since the decision prepared by the Defense Ministry only applies to a partial change of jurisdiction for certain units. "The hasty adoption of such documents on the spur of the moment, under pressure from certain deputies," he said, "does not put the Duma in the best position."

Commenting on the debate that has mounted in society, Mikhail Kolesnikov stressed that these formations are an extremely long way from Moscow and this creates difficulties with their operational command and control. Moreover, the 21st Airborne Brigade stationed in the North Caucasus Military District is constantly fighting and operates as part of the district's forces. "Today there is a situation," he said, "whereby the Airborne Troops do not have their own operational mission. At the same time the airborne divisions stationed in the Leningrad and North Caucasus Military Districts have become Border Guard troops. It was therefore decided to transfer them operationally to the commanders of these districts."

The chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces flatly refuted the idea of interpreting these moves as an attempt to wind up the Airborne Troops. Mikhail Kolesnikov recalled that airborne assault [desantno-shturmovoy] brigades were set up in the mid-seventies and until the early nineties formed part of the Ground Forces. At the same time every airborne assault brigade had combat and transport aviation units, but in practice possessed heavy arms and armored vehicles. In the early nineties it was decided to transfer the airborne assault brigades to the command of the Airborne Troops, but in the process the helicopter units were left under the jurisdiction of the Air Force command.

The experience of the next few years demonstrated that this decision was not well thought-out and posed serious difficulties. "Can you call it reasonable when you have a situation," he wondered, "whereby the commander of the North Caucasus Military District, whose troops are waging combat operations in Chechnya, is forced every time in a combat situation to coordinate his decisions with the command of the Airborne Troops in Moscow when it comes to involving airborne assault subunits in military operations?"

According to Colonel Yuriy Mamchur, chief of the Russian Federation Defense Ministry Information Directorate, the defense minister's order on the Airborne Troops is fully in line with the Russian Federation president's edict "On the Basic Guidelines for Russian Federation Military Organizational Development," which stipulates a stage-by-stage transition to the territorial principle of controlling and commanding troops and forces.

Russia: Lack of Funds May Cripple Land Forces

LD0302185696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1704 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Mikhail Shevtsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 3 (ITAR-TASS) — Russia's land forces may lose over 80 per cent of their combat helicopters by the turn of the century and become incapable of carrying out combat missions in the air if their funding remains on the present level, a high-ranking military official said.

Colonel-General Vitaliy Pavlov, the commander of the land forces' aviation, told journalists on Saturday that the land forces will have only 12 per cent of the combat helicopters they have today, that is 150-200 craft, by the year 2000 if the government does not increase defence spending.

He said that some of the helicopters have been in service for 20-30 years and need to be replaced. To keep their combat capability, Russia's land forces need 30-40 new craft annually, but get only three to four because of the lack of funds.

Last year, the army received enough funds to buy only seven Mi-24 combat helicopters. No Ka-50 helicopters, also known as the Black Shark, were purchased in 1995. This year, the defence budget provides for the purchase of only two Ka-50 craft.

Over 40 per cent of the land forces' helicopters stand idle because of the lack of spare parts and fuel and the shortage of funds to repair and modernise airfields. Because of this, pilots fly only 20-30 hours annually instead of the required 200.

Poor social and welfare support also adds to the problem. Over 4,000 families of military pilots had had no permanent housing as of January 1, 1996.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Committee Plans To Examine START II Treaty

LD0502122696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1123 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 5 (INTERFAX) — The Defense Committee of the Russian parliament's lower chamber (the State Duma) has elaborated criteria to evaluate the Russian-American START-II treaty from the point of view of Russian interests and national security, committee chairman Gen. Lev Rokhlin told INTERFAX Monday. The general is a member of the Our Home is Russia faction.

The document submitted to the Russian Defense Ministry will enable it to outline its stand on the treaty. This will be followed by hearings at Duma committees on the START-II treaty with the participation of representatives from the Russian Armed Forces General Staff.

The criteria are based on the changes in the possibilities to implement the treaty after the disintegration of the

Soviet Union and with due account of NATO eastward expansion.

"If NATO comes closer to Russian borders, both strategic and operation-tactical missiles could be used," said Rokhlin.

Russia: Duma Statements, Appeals Reported

MM0502133196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "At the State Duma"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Miners' Strike Threatens Upheaval

The State Duma adopted a statement on the Russiawide miners' strike 31 January.

Currently, the statement noted, there is a crisis in the coal industry which threatens to result in a social explosion in mining regions in the very near future. The facts show that miners' labor collectives are at the end of their rope, since none of the Russian Federation Government's numerous promises to pay up the amount owed on salaries has been carried out. Over the past three years miners have repeatedly appealed to the Russian Federation president to hold a meeting to solve the problems that have emerged — but this too has gone unanswered.

All this, the Duma believes, is a direct consequence of the ineffectiveness and irresponsibility of the executive, which has placed itself beyond public and parliamentary control. Supporting the mining collectives' fair and legitimate demands to be fully paid the amount owed to them for wages in 1995, the State Duma proposes that the Russian Federation president receive a delegation from the miners to hold talks on emergency measures to solve the coal sector's problems.

The State Duma drew the attention of the president, the Russian Federation Government, and society as a whole to the fact that a further failure to take account of the mining collectives' fair demands could draw labor collectives from other sectors into the conflict and lead to economic and political upheaval in the country.

Airborne Troops To Serve Fatherland Again

The State Duma has adopted an appeal to the Russian Federation president voicing our lower house's view of the draft order "On Improving the Leadership of the Troops (Forces)" prepared by the Russian Federation Defense Ministry. Under the order, it is proposed as of 1 February 1996 to transfer the 56th Separate Airborne Brigade to the commander of the North Caucasus Military District; the 100th Separate Airborne Brigade to the commander of the Siberia Military District; the 11th Separate Airborne Brigade to the commander of the Transbaykal Military District; and the 83d Separate Airborne Brigade to the commander of the Far East Military District.

Under the same order it is planned to transfer the 76th Airborne Division and the 36th Separate Airborne Brigade to the commander of the Leningrad Military District; and the 7th Airborne Division and the 21st Separate Airborne Brigade to the commander of the North Caucasus Military District.

The appeal notes that it is hard to agree that the reassignment of these Airborne Troops divisions and brigades will be a successful step in implementing the long-planned reform of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. The Duma believes that this kind of fundamental decision affecting the combat capability of our Army and the fate of its servicemen and their families should not be made in secret or without consulting those whom it affects. In adopting this decision a number of very important circumstances should have been taken into account. First, Airborne Troops officers have signed contracts stipulating that they will spend their military service with these troops — most of them do not want to serve with the Ground Forces. The reassignment of these military units could result in these men being transferred to new postings — and this would result in major housing problems and problems with the provision of facilities for servicemen's families.

Second, the subordination of airborne units to military district commanders presupposes that they will be used in the assault and ground-attack role, requiring additional provision of equipment — equipment which is not currently available.

In light of the above, the State Duma has appealed to the president as the supreme commander in chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces to suspend the transfer of a number of Airborne Troops divisions and brigades to military district commanders, and to ensure that the proposed transformations are discussed with those whom they would directly affect.

On the Crisis in Higher Educational Institutions

Having examined the question of the crisis in the higher educational institutions of St. Petersburg and other Russian cities, the State Duma has proposed that the Russian Federation Government take emergency measures to pay the money owed for salaries to teachers and for grants to undergraduate and postgraduate students at higher educational institutions, and that the State Duma be informed of the results. The Russian Federation Comptroller's Office has been instructed to carry out unscheduled checks into the way in which the line items in the federal budget for 1996 relating to the funding of Russia's higher educational institutions are being implemented.

Russia: New Minimum Wage Law Seen Fueling Inflation

MM0502124996 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Yelena Ishkova: "New Duma Starts Working Toward Fresh Inflation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian president doubted the advisability of the law "On Raising the Minimum Wage," which has been given its first reading by the Duma, and sent deputies his findings. Let me remind you that the draft proposes raising the minimum wage by a factor of 1.2 as of 1 February. In their desire to please the voters at any price (or boost their own salaries), Duma members seem to have forgotten that a law "On the Minimum Wage" already exists. It was signed 13 November 1992. Under this law the minimum wage was last increased in November, and since 1 January it has been equivalent to 63,250 rubles. According to this law, it is next due to be raised 1 April. Deputies were reminded of this by the president in his findings.

This draft is a splendid example of the new Duma's readiness to make populist moves, which may fuel the rise in prices and inflation and nullify all the efforts made by the government in 1995. It was drafted by the last Duma's Committee for Labor and Social Policy. But there are still people who can remember it now, since eight of the committee's members, along with its Chairman Sergey Kalashnikov, have once again gotten into the Duma.

In proposing the 20-percent indexation the Committee for Labor seems to be refusing to recognize that inflation is no longer what it was. The fall and year-end did not see the traditional upsurge in inflation, and the January rate is lower than ever.

The draft law elicited serious protests from the Budget Committee. Chairman Mikhail Zadornov opposed its adoption since the law on the 1996 budget makes no provision for expenditure arising from such an unforeseen increase in the minimum wage.

Russia: Duma Questions Fairness of Loans-for-Shares Auctions

MK0302145596 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Bekker: "The State Duma Has Begun To Revise the Results of Loans-for-Shares Auctions. The Head of "Norilskiy Nikel" Is Ready To Raise $170 Million to This End"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Next week might see an unprecedented event which calls into question the results of the loans-for-shares auctions held by the State Property Committee last year. One of the major deals — for shares of the "Norilskiy Nikel" joint-stock company — is on the brink of collapse.

Yesterday's parliamentary hearings "On the Course of Privatization of the 'Norilskiy Nikel' Russian Joint-Stock Company and Related Socioeconomic Problems," according to Valeriy Zubov, head of the Krasnoyarsk Kray administration, "have strategic importance for Russia." After denationalization, the producer of 90 percent of the nickel, 80 percent of the cobalt, 75 percent of the copper, and 100 percent of the platinum in the country is in crisis. Alfred Kokh, first deputy chairman of the State Property Committee, said that neither the joint-stock company's poor financial condition nor the three-month delay in wage payments has to do with privatization: "This is the result of inefficient management." [passage omitted]

He was supported by Valeriy Zubov, who said that the interests of the state have not been infringed and that there are sufficient methods to retain control of the "Norilskiy Nikel" enterprises. According to Zubov, the stockholders' emergency meeting, canceled in connection with the State Duma hearings and an arbitration court decision, should go ahead notwithstanding: "Only this will help clarify how export policy was conducted and who is to blame for the crisis at 'Norilskiy Nikel.'"

Anatoliy Filatov, head of the "Norilskiy Nikel" board of directors, however, indicated that there is no further need for the meeting. After a two-day conference with ONEKSIMbank President Vladimir Potanin, with the participation of Mr. Kokh and Duma Industry Committee Chairman Vladimir Gusev, he said: "We shall sign a protocol whereby the bank returns the stake to the state; the loan will be returned to the bank, and the stake will be managed by a special state authority." Responding to the deputies' question of where the money to retire the credit will come from, Mr. Filatov, who has not paid wages to the Norilsk Mining and Enrichment Combine since November, said: "We shall try — [the funds will come] from the joint-stock company's assets." The sum in question, incidentally, is $170 million.

It was impossible to judge whether what Mr. Filatov said was true either from Mr. Kokh's presentation or from Mr. Gusev's brief statement that "progress has been achieved at the negotiations" and that the text of the protocol will be ready for the next Duma plenary session. Sources at ONEKSIMbank refrained from comments "pending receipt of the minutes of the session," observing, however, that the issue was not discussed by the committee in the way Mr. Filatov presented it.

Russia: Duma Decree on Election Law Violation Reported

MK0302125796 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 3

[POSTFACTUM report: "Duma Will Deal With Yeltsin Supporters"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The State Duma passed a decree at its yesterday's session to recommend that the Central Electoral Commission consider the facts of election legislation violation cited by State Duma deputies and inform the house accordingly. The Duma even asked the general prosecutor to verify the facts of violation of election legislation and consider instituting criminal proceedings based on the facts. The decree was prompted by information that chiefs of Ministry of Railroads enterprises were pressuring their staffs into adding signatures in support of nominating Boris Yeltsin for a second term.

Russia: State Duma Speaker Seleznev Interviewed

LD0302175396 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1318 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Interview with Russian State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev by Mayak commentator Yuliy Semenov; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Semenov] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, you have two years of working in the Duma behind you. Your face is a common sight here. What are your first impressions? I know you are not inclined to make hasty conclusions, but nevertheless, what would you like to change in the way the Duma lives and works?

[Seleznev] First of all, I would like — well, this will obviously depend not only on me — to improve the quality of our laws. Therefore, I believe the deputies and our legal department must first of all, concentrate on observing the regulations for drafting laws, because this is one of the reasons for our draft laws being turned down. Second, we must work clean in the legal sense in adopting particular articles of laws. Third, we must check our laws against the Constitution. Fourth, we now must also check against other legal documents: The civil code, for example. Our draft laws were often turned down because we failed to do this.

A couple of days ago we had a meeting with Yegor Semenovich Stroyev at the Federation Council. I think we share the understanding that neither the Federation Council nor the Duma are interested in increasing the numbers of flawed laws. I believe we will manage to adjust this mechanism.

[Semenov] At your meeting with the president yesterday, did you discuss the idea of bringing closer the machinery for drafting laws so that any differences of opinion are sorted out at an early stage, rather than when the draft has been prepared?

[Seleznev] Yes, we discussed these issues. Moreover, they were raised by the president himself. Now we will try and make our legal departments in every structure pinpoint at an early stage the places any differences that can emerge and work to avoid the bill being turned down. Also, with regard to bills on distributing budget funds, we sometimes do not wait for a government resolution and try to adopt them early, thus breaking the regulations. This is another one of the reasons why the bills are being turned down.

[Semenov] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, I feel the Duma has become something very special to you. Meanwhile, some of your Duma and Communist Party colleagues stand for reforming the representative system and returning to the system of Soviets. What do you make of it?

[Seleznev] I personally believe too that the powers allocated to the Duma by the Constitution are very limited. I believe too that the Soviets were not that bad, but the Constitution posits that the highest legislative body is now the Federal Assembly consisting of two chambers. Therefore, we must adhere to this. To return to the Soviets, we must first change the Constitution. This is a task for the future. Therefore, the State Duma must work on the basis of the Constitution and reflect the interests of the electorate and try to solve vitally important issues.

[Semenov] Do you think the presidential election campaign could interfere with the Duma's work? The communists' political opponents fear that the Duma might become your party's arena in the fight for the presidential post.

[Seleznev] We discussed this question at the faction's meeting. Despite the fact that the Duma's work will acquire a strong political complexion now, our faction does not intend to derail the work of the committees and the work of the State Duma as a whole. Therefore, we will have to combine the work at the State Duma and preparations to the presidential elections. As for our political opponents, there are many speculations about the election team set up by the president. Is it headed by Oleg Soskovets, first deputy prime minister, or not? So far, we have found no documents. I am convinced that government members must not head any election teams.

[Semenov] With your permission, let us speak about your meeting with the president yesterday. As far as I know, both you and the president are satisfied with the meeting. Does it mean that political differences will not hamper cooperation between the heads of the branches of power?

[Seleznev] Yes, I told Boris Nikolayevich that ours will be the meetings between the president and the chairman of the State Duma. But I also told him that if he was interested in my opinion as a representative of the Left, then I am prepared to answer his questions and to discuss them. I think the president took an interest in the proposal.

[Semenov] What is your attitude as the head of the State Duma toward the role and tasks of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly?

[Seleznev] The CIS Interparliamentary Assembly is probably more important than the Council of Europe, because this is a commonwealth of countries that were part of the Soviet Union. We have common interests, therefore I would like to make the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly a more efficient body so that it can adopt a common legal legislation in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Russia: New Duma Defense Committee Chief Interviewed

MM0502121396 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Feb 96 p 1

[Interview with Lieutenant General Lev Rokhlin, chairman of the Russian Federation State Duma Defense Committee, by Captain 2d Rank Vladimir Yermolin; place, date not given: "The Chief Thing Is To Know the Army. Parliamentary Experience Will Come" — first paragraph is introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] From KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's file:

Lev Yakovlevich Rokhlin was born in 1947. He is a lieutenant general. He commanded the 8th Army Guards Corps. On 17 December 1995 he became a Russian Federation State Duma deputy for the "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] electoral bloc. He is married with a son and a daughter.

[Yermolin] Lev Yakovlevich, what induced you, a fighting general and consummate professional, to change your sphere of operations? Experience shows that military people usually become deputies not at the height of their career, to put it mildly.

[Rokhlin] I will tell you bluntly: I cannot picture myself outside the Army. It was a difficult decision for me to leave my corps and swap my uniform for a jacket. But the situation developed in such a way that not one of the generals directly associated with the troops ended up in the Duma. I see it as important that, among the other esteemed deputies who are specialists in the military sphere, the laws of the "military package" should also be worked on by those who still have to serve according to these laws. I will not hide the fact that the Ministry of Defense made a corresponding proposal. I accepted it with understanding. Although — and this is already known from the press — at first I was inclined to transfer my deputy's mandate to another general and to return to the troops myself. But, I repeat yet again, circumstances demanded that I make a different decision.

[Yermolin] As a result, you are not only a deputy but also chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee....

[Rokhlin] Yes, it is a committee of exceptional importance. I know that both the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] and the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] aspired to this chairmanship, but as a result of accords reached between the factions' leaders the Defense Committee is headed by a representative of the NDR faction. I shall endeavor to do everything to ensure that our committee is highly efficient.

[Yermolin] Looking at the list of committee members (the list was published in yesterday's KRASNAYA ZVEZDA), the political hue will be very motley. Your four deputy chairmen are not NDR supporters. Will the Defense Committee not become a scene of political vendettas?

[Rokhlin] I do not think so. Many of the committee members are professionals with many years' experience of service in the troops. All of us must, I hope, be united by a desire to help the Armed Forces to resolve their problems and to make them the state's reliable shield. It is on this basis, I would like to believe, that we will coordinate our positions and find a common language over disputed questions.

[Yermolin] Is it possible to say anything yet about the committee's legislative plans?

[Rokhlin] For now I shall refrain from speaking about this. First we must all gather together and exchange opinions. Although there are, of course, definite proposals and elaborations. But it would be more expedient to speak about this a little later.

[Yermolin] Lev Yakovlevich, you are embarking on legislative work at a time when the Army is being criticized from all sides. The main charge is that we do not know how to fight, we cannot cope with Dudayev's bandits, etc. What can you, as a fighting general who fought in Chechnya and now a legislator, say in reply to this criticism?

[Rokhlin] There is cause to criticize the Army. But, getting to the root of the matter, complaints must be leveled not at professional military people but at the state which placed the Army in this position. Undermanning and the shortage of weapons, hardware, and modern means of communication. They cut the Army's funding year after year and then accuse it of reforming itself poorly. The existing approach to Army funding and manning must be changed. As regards the level of troop training and the officers' professionalism, we have repeatedly demonstrated in Chechnya that we can resolve the most complex combat tasks. Speaking about the recent events at Pervomayskoye, this is my opinion: We must not fight with elite subunits using artillery, tanks, and aircraft. "Alfa" is trained to operate under totally different conditions. It would have no equal. Out there, in the open field, combined-arms servicemen would have operated more effectively in taking a population center which was being held by a gang with heavy arms and grenade launchers. In just the same way Airborne Force units also have a specific modus operandi. Airborne troops are good in fast-moving combat, when carrying out specifically a landing operation. They have light arms and light hardware. They are not trained to interact with artillery and tanks. If you make them tackle tasks that are not characteristic of them, there will be big losses on our side. I think everyone realizes that I respect both the Airborne Forces and the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] special subunits, but it is simply a question of the specific nature of the combat. This exists and must be taken into account. In general, I wish to say that no one would take the risk of placing himself under the surgeon's knife and suggesting to him how to perform an appendectomy. But in our military business, just look and listen — everyone is an expert, even those who have not served a single day in the Army.

[Yermolin] So, only combined-arms units will be able to put an end to the Chechen war?

[Rokhlin] Politicians must and will put an end to this war. But I want to emphasize that the Russian Army has sufficient forces to fulfill the most complex tasks in Chechnya.

[Yermolin] Lev Yakovlevich, returning to parliamentary matters, what would you like to say to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's readers in your new capacity as chairman of a State Duma committee?

[Rokhlin] What can I say?... True, today I do not yet have experience of parliamentary work. But, on the other hand, I well know how the Army lives and what troubles it is experiencing today. Having become a deputy, I have a tremendous wish to help the Armed Forces to resolve at least some of the problems. I hope that my new colleagues on the committee are of the same mind. For, after all, the future Russia needs a strong and reliable Army. I can tell the readers of my own KRASNAYA ZVEZDA that I shall endeavor not to disappoint my comrades in arms and my voters in their expectations.

Russia: New Defense Industry Committee Head's Plans Viewed

MK0302144096 Moscow KURANTY in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Defense Industries Sustained by Hopes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Federation Goskomoboronprom's [State Committee on Defense Industry Sectors] new chairman, Zinoviy Pak, has submitted to Boris Yeltsin for consideration a draft armaments program. In the view of the Russian Federation Goskomoboronprom chairman, a military of the old-time size is burdensome to and unneeded by Russia. It should be considerably smaller and better armed.

Zinoviy Pak stressed that he would not have taken this appointment had he not had a firm idea and clear vision of how to steer defense industry enterprises in the current situation. Even though he did have a program, he agreed to accept this office "with colossal difficulty" realizing "the gravity of the decision and the entire complexity of how to implement what has been planned."

Zinoviy Pak proposes to begin with identifying priority scientific and technical areas in the Russian defense industry and primarily supporting dual-purpose technologies. He does not object against international capital investing in such projects. High hopes are pinned on the creation of financial-industrial groups.

The leader of the Committee on Defense Industry Sectors voiced readiness to take up the problem of mutual offset of debts and timely payment of state orders.

Answering personal questions, he explained that, having been born in Ukraine (whence his unusual last name, that stirred Korean journalists), he had never been eager to come to Moscow. A scholar, doctor of technical sciences, and member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, he is primarily keen on research, and he accepted only those offices that helped him do it.

The new position for Z. Pak is "an opportunity to try and save what remains of science of the future and high technologies, which still are a priority and are concentrated at defense industry enterprises."

Russia: Communists Say No Talks With Government

LD0402161196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 4 (INTERFAX) — The Communist Party of Russia has not held and will not hold any talks with the Russian government, Communist Party Deputy Chairman Valentin Kuptsov told INTERFAX.

Communist representatives will not join the present government, Kuptsov stressed.

Nothing will change in the country as a result of the "feverish" personnel changes made by the Russian president in the wake of the 1995 parliamentary polls unless the present regime is removed by constitutional methods, he said.

The Communist Party sees the "castling within the supreme echelon of power" and the populist moves by President Boris Yeltsin towards meeting social needs as "pre-election fever," Kuptsov said.

Populist measures will reach a peak in mid-March when Yeltsin "gives up Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin" who the president now needs as "a target for criticism," Kuptsov said.

Regional Affairs

Russia: Krasnodar: Law Enforcement Agents 'On High Alert'

LD0202151996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KRASNODAR, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — Law enforcers in the Krasnodar territory in southern Russia are on high alert in the wake of the Kizlyar hostage-taking raid, an INTERFAX correspondent reported from the site Friday.

All approaches to Krasnodar and its vital installations are guarded by the police and local Cossacks. Armored vehicles patrol the Kuban water reservoir.

As many as 12 stolen vehicles, 15 firearms and 600 grammes of various drugs were found and seized on the road from Adygea, North Caucasus, to Krasnodar in January alone.

Russia: Krasnodar Governor Bomb Threat on Chechnya

964F0925B Nalchik SEVERNYY KAVKAZ in Russian No. 4, Jan 96 p 6

[Article by V. Shaposhnikov: "Terrorism: People Have Become Hot-Tempered. They Resort to Bombs at the Slightest Provocation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] An unknown person telephoned the reception room of the governor of Krasnodarskiy Kray and, speaking in a strong Caucasian accent, warned: If the head of the administration does not speak on television and sharply condemn the actions of the federal troops in Chechnya and in the village of Pervomayskoye, he will blow up the kray administration building. All officials, with the exception of the governor, were quickly evacuated. The head of administration himself was on holiday in Kislovodsk, and his deputies announced that they would not in any way meet such demands. Sappers, having searched the offices, found no explosive materials, but did not succeed in arresting the ill-intentioned plotter. Then three students reported that a bomb had been planted in a university building. The jokers proved to be stupid enough to call from an apartment telephone. The number locator went into action, and all were quickly apprehended. Each of them is now threatened with three years in prison for a deliberately false report of a terrorist act. However, no one threatened anyone in the Krasnodar puppet theater. A young man came into one of the commercial firms that leased premises in this theater and left an attache case. In a few minutes it exploded, but fortunately no one was hurt.

Russia: Nemtsov To Back Yeltsin if Troops Withdraw From Chechnya

MK0202133996 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 2 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Sergey Mulin: "Nemtsov's Millions. The Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Trades a 'Phased' Withdrawal of Troops From Chechnya in Exchange for Supporting Yeltsin in Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] One million signatures — precisely the quota for participation in the presidential election race — were raised in Nizhniy Novgorod

Oblast alone under an appeal to put a decisive end to the bloodshed in Chechnya. The lists presented by the Nizhniy Novgorod governor to Boris Yeltsin, according to Boris Nemtsov himself, produced a magical impression on the president. "The president will have to take measures if the campaign is continued in other regions," Mr. Nemtsov said, encouraged by Boris Nikolayevich's question: What will happen if a similar signature-raising campaign is organized in some other Federation components, including the two capitals? "This could really lead to success."

Several dozen million signatures by Russian citizens in the run-up to the presidential elections could, according to the Nizhniy Novgorod governor, initiate a "negotiating process in Chechnya with the participation of all conflicting sides and a gradual withdrawal of troops."

"I am a provincial governor and I cannot organize negotiations in Chechnya, but if the president stops the bloodshed, I will support him. If not, I won't." [passage omitted]

The success of the "gentle blackmailing" of Mr. Yeltsin can be partially attributed to both the president's own wish to be extricated from the ineffective military campaign under the pressure of "public opinion" and regional elites and the eloquence of the sociological survey results presented to Boris Nikolayevich by Boris Yefimovich. President Yeltsin's rating in Nizhniy Novgorod Oblast is 5.9 percent — 0.3 percent higher than Chernomyrdin's, but he comes only fifth after Zyuganov (10.9 percent), Yavlinskiy (10 percent), Zhirinovskiy (8.2 percent), and Lebed (6.2 percent). [passage omitted]

The Nizhniy Novgorod governor believes that the main thing in the power-sharing agreement with the center is his right to appoint and dismiss the head of the local State Property Committee division so that "the economy does not depend on the political situation in Moscow." The oblast would also like to get administrative control of state stakes in republic enterprises located on its territory, stressing, however, that "we are not making any claims on federal property." Boris Nemtsov said that the president's main concern is the timely payment of wages and pensions throughout the country, warning, however, that "there can be no indexation if they cannot be paid even in former amounts."

Boris Nemtsov refused to name the best candidate in the 1996 presidential elections: "There is no answer. I think that it is senseless to look for new options several months before the elections. Personal sympathies and antipathies must be cast aside and a pragmatic calculation made."

Russia: Tatar President Supports Yeltsin in Elections

LD0202143796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KAZAN, Feb 2 (INTERFAX-EURASIA) — Tatar President Mintimer Shaymiyev believes it "desirable" that Boris Yeltsin be re-elected as the Russian president, but "without the war in Chechnya," Shaymiyev told reporters in Kazan, the capital of the Russian republic of Tatarstan, on Friday.

The current Russian president "adheres to democracy more than others," and guarantees the current relationships between Tatarstan and the center," he said.

"The war in Chechnya is a mistake by the federal authorities. I think that Boris Yeltsin understands this and will do his best to solve the problem. The four months before the elections during our tense time is a period quite long enough to find the solution," said the Tatar president.

Russia: Adygeya Leader Backs Campaign Against Chechen War

LD0202152096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 2 (INTERFAX) — President of Adygeya, a Russian republic in the North Caucasus, Aslan Dzharimov supports the nationwide collection of signatures against the war in Chechnya.

Dzharimov told INTERFAX Friday that "the authorities of Adygeya have called for political settlement in Chechnya since the very beginning of the conflict, and they will help this humane action in their republic."

The initiative of Nizhniy Novgorod governor Boris Nemtsov to collect signatures of Russian residents against the war in Chechnya was supported by the Democratic Choice of Russia and the Democratic Russia movements, as well as by the heads of several Russian regions and republics.

"There is no alternative to peace in the Northern Caucasus, it has enough sound forces to prevent the Chechen conflict from spreading in the region," Dzharimov believes.

"As long as the war goes on, no-one can be safe from events similar to those in Budennovsk, Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye," said the president.

He thinks that both Russia and abroad there are forces wishing to involve the Russian people in a Caucasian war, whose tragedy they survived in the last century.

Russia: North Ossetia Takes Extra Security Measures

LD0202185896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1559 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Vladikavkaz, 2 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — The Prosecutor's Office, Ministry for Internal Affairs, and the Federal Security Service have been instructed to take urgent measures in the fight against crime and terrorism in North Ossetia, government head Yuriy Biragov said today at a meeting with the republic's religious leaders.

According to him, the situation in North Ossetia and around it remains tense. The law and order bodies of the republic have, therefore, taken additional measures for ensuring security. [passage omitted]

Russia: Ingush Refugees Should Be Settled Gradually

LD0402142196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1347 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Valeriy Shanayev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIKAVKAZ, capital of North Ossetia, February 4 (ITAR-TASS) — The return of Ingush refugees has become irreversible. As many as 1,300 Ingush families have returned from Ingushetia to the places of their permanent residence: villages in the Prigorodnyy district of North Ossetia.

All in all, some 13,000 Ingushes now live in the North Ossetian Republic, ITAR-TASS learned on Sunday from Deputy Minister for Nationalities and Foreign Relations of North Ossetia Lyubov Vashurina, an organiser of a meeting between women of the Ossetian and Ingush nationalities from the village of Tarskoye, Prigorodnyy district, which was held in Vladikavkaz.

The meeting discussed the activities of the women's movements in North Ossetia and Ingushetia to create a favourable moral and phsychological climate in relations between residents in the zone of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict.

According to the deputy minister, Tarskoye is one of four villages in the Prigorodny district where, according to a decision of the North Ossetian government, Ingush refugees are permitted to return.

Work in this sphere has been conducted for the third year running. However, it is being hampered due to slow restoration work of the destroyed housing stock, utilities and services establishments as well as due to the fact that it is difficult for refugees to find jobs.

The problem connected with ensuring security for returning Ingushes has not been settled either.

Vashurina noted that the Ingush side insists on accelerating the return of refugees to 16 villages in North Ossetia and on compiling a specific timetable.

The North Ossetian government and parliament suggests that this difficult issue should be settled gradually in the belief that refugees can return only to eight villages for the time being.

Russia: Vorkuta Miners Call Off Strike

LD0302105496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0924 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Viktor Makarov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Vorkuta, 3 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Vorkuta's miners intend to halt their strike this afternoon, starting with the second shift. This decision was taken today by the Arctic town's coordinating council of miners' trade unions for conducting the protest actions including the strike.

Viktor Semenov, chairman of the Vorkuta Independent Miners' Trade Union, told the ITAR-TASS correspondent that the strike had been halted because of a number of decisions taken by the Russian president and government concerning the miners' problems.

A positive role had also been played by the agreement that had been reached with the special commission from Moscow to complete, together with the miners' trade unions, the drafting of documents on the Pechora coal basin before 20 February. If this is not done, Semenov stressed, the strike will be resumed after 20 February at the mines and enterprises of Vorkuta's coal industry.

Russia: Cherkess Group Opposes Sanctions Against Abkhazia

LD0502123496 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0700 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The council and executive committee of the international association of the Cherkess people held an expanded meeting in the capital of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic [Cherkessk] yesterday. The meeting considered the situation in Abkhaz-Georgian relations following the resolutions taken at the Moscow CIS summit.

Yuriy Kalmykov, president of the association, said the economic blockade would result in famine, and this virtually equals genocide. Other speakers said that the renewal of armed confrontation in Abkhazia is inadmissible.

The resolution passed by the meeting says that in case the resolution of the CIS heads of state is implemented, the association of the Cherkess people will do everything to save Abkhazia.

Russia: Petersburg Poll, Seleznev on Change of Government

MK0302130996 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Besik Pipiya: "Well-To-Do St. Petersburg Residents Do Not Want Premier's Resignation. According to Seleznev, 'Yabloko' Faction Is Taking Political Action"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The SNITs [expansion unknown], a polling firm, has conducted a survey among St. Petersburg residents to find out their views about the government's possible resignation and replacement of Chernomyrdin by Yavlinskiy. Most respondents (33 percent) were opposed to Chernomyrdin's ousting. Curiously, the policy of the incumbent head of government was backed mostly by relatively well-to-do Petersburg residents whose monthly income reaches at least 500,000 rubles. A total of 30 percent of those polled stood for the government's resignation. These were mainly people earning up to 200,000 rubles a month.

"If Boris Yeltsin nominates Grigoriy Yavlinskiy to the post of head of the Russian government, will you support this appointment or will you not?" the second question by the SNITs asked. A total of 35 percent of those polled were opposed to Yavlinskiy's premiership; 33 percent welcomed it; and 32 percent responded, "It is hard to say."

With regard to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] and "Yabloko" joining forces to topple the Chernomyrdin cabinet, State Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznev told a SANKT-PETERBURGSKIYE VEDOMOSTI correspondent that "the CPRF faction was not going to play these games." In Seleznev's words, "Yabloko" essentially is going to take a political action. In fact, the current government is dependent, all its domestic and foreign policies being shaped by the president. If Chernomyrdin were replaced by, let us say, Luzhkov, little would change in the few months left before the presidential election. We are quite satisfied with the fact that Yeltsin has removed the most notorious personalities — Andrey Kozyrev and Anatoliy Chubays — from his team, the Duma speaker emphasized.

Russia: Ground Force Chief Arrives for Urals Inspection

MM0202203096 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Leonid Pozdeyev under "News" rubric: "To the Urals To Conduct a Check"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yekaterinburg — Colonel General Vladimir Semenov, commander in chief of Ground Forces, has arrived in Yekaterinburg. Under his direct leadership a group of High Command officers and generals will conduct a planned check of the level of combat readiness of units and combined units of the Urals Military District, the state of military discipline, etc.

Russia: New Series of Tu-204-200 Airliners Produced in Kazan

LD0302183796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1052 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Nikolay Sorokin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kazan, 3 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — The first aircraft of a new series of Tu-204-200 passenger airliners was produced today by the Gorbunov Aircraft production association in Kazan.

The aircraft, which has been developed by the Tupolev design bureau, is in all regards on a par with the best of the world's civilian aircraft. In an interview with an ITAR-TASS correspondent, leading designer Vitaliy Zhilyayev recalled the main performance features of the new airliner. It has a speed of 950 km per hour and a range of 7,000 km. It can carry 210 passengers. Compared with similar models the Tu-204-200 engine, which is produced by Perm designers, consumes three tonnes of fuel less per hour of flight. Incidentally all the other components of the new aircraft are also made in Russia. It is envisaged that the aircraft can be refitted simply as a freight version.

The Kazan aircraft enterprise will be able with appropriate funding to annually produce up to 30 of these aircraft.

Russia: Tactical Missile Test Launched in Leningrad Region

LD0202132696 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 2 Feb 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] A test combat test launch of a missile capable of carrying nuclear charge was conducted at the artillery testing ground on the border between Leningrad and Pskov. In the past, for this type of exercise the missile troops brigade used to travel to a state testing ground in the Astrakhan Region. These days, there is simply no money to transport the missile unit. Just as there is not enough cash for paying the officers' wages on time. Nevertheless, the combat task was performed with distinction. It seems that the testing ground near the Luga will now be regularly used for combat test launches of tactical missiles.

Economic Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Law on Banks, Banking Activity

LD0302204496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1354 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 3 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — The president of the Russian Federation today signed the law "On amendments to the RSFSR law 'On banks and banking activity in the RSFSR'" which was passed by the State Duma on 7 July 1995 and approved by the Federation Council on 21 July 1995. The new law provides for the legal regulation of banking activity.

It stipulates, in particular, that the banking system of the Russian Federation includes the Central Bank of Russia, credit organizations and also branches and representations of foreign banks.

The law guarantees the stability of the banking system, the protection of the rights and interests of investors and creditors of credit organizations, inter-bank relations and customer services; it also stipulates the procedure for registering and licensing banking operations of credit organizations and supervision of their activities, says the press release from the press service of the Russian president.

Russia: Soskovets Urges Balance of Stabilization, Growth

LD0302100096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0935 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Oleg Velichko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 3 (ITAR-TASS) — First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets has urged the government to reach a reasonable balance between financial stabilization and production growth. He noted that macro-economic stabilization had resulted in certain losses in the production sector. Under conditions of financial shortages in the industry continuing for the fifth year re-equipment or structural restructuring of the industrial sector cannot be discussed seriously, Soskovets said.

At a meeting with representatives of the main Russian news agencies today Soskovets pointed out that Russian "needs investments and we openly say so." "All the references to an uncertain political situation are as imaginary as the recent speculations about a change in the course of economic reforms," Soskovets said.

However, he admitted that the economic situation in the country remains rather difficult. The government is chiefly concerned about low investment activities, he said. The overall capital investments have declined by almost 20 per cent in comparison with 1994. However, the exodus of capital from the sector of material production into the trade and mediation sector is narrowing. Investments in non-production sector, and, primarily, housing construction are on the rise. "The government regards these factors as a basis for further economic growth," Soskovets said.

The recent elections to the State Duma showed that ideological dogma of the past was overcome, Soskovets said. "Russia is increasingly turning into a country adherent to democratic principles," Soskovets said. "Even communists who have 34 percent of seats in the lower chamber have declared their support to the course of reforms modified in terms of their social orientation," the deputy Premier said.

Russia: Chubays Writes on Economic Reforms

MS0502100996 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 5 Feb 96 p 14

[Article by Anatoliy Chubays, former first deputy Russian Prime Minister: "Down The Ruble Corridor"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If I were asked to give advice to governments carrying out financial stabilisation, I would say this: do not try to solve this problem during the run-up to an election — if, of course, history gives you the chance to avoid doing so.

My appointment as deputy prime minister responsible for the economy occurred in November 1994 after the stormy events of "Black Tuesday", when the ruble fell by a third against the dollar in just a few days. The drop was preceded by a number of decisions to increase budget spending financed by central bank credits.

As a result, monthly inflation reached 18 per cent by the start of 1995, setting off a mass retreat from the ruble. Financial markets were in a panic, deepened by the unsuccessful military actions of Russian troops in Chechnya.

The main demand for hard currency came not from the commercial banks but from the population at large. The hard currency reserves of the central bank dropped during the last week of January below $1bn, with sales of up to $250m a day. The country was one step away from a large-scale financial catastrophe.

The catastrophe was averted only thanks to the strict economic policy introduced by the government with the backing of the central bank. This involved a sharp reduction and then elimination of budget financing through central bank credits which succeeded in easing the pressure in the currency markets by the beginning of February.

While this was happening, the government had to secure parliamentary approval for the 1995 budget and conclude agreements with the International Monetary Fund for a standby loan. The budget aimed to reduce the deficit from 11 per cent to 5 per cent of gross domestic product, and it took three months of battles and more than 30 rounds of voting in parliament last year to win passage.

However, for the first time since the start of the reforms, Russia had set a sensible and strict budget in the first quarter of the fiscal year. Negotiations were successfully completed with the IMF for a standby loan which not only provided an additional $6bn for the federal budget but also ensured strict monthly monitoring of the most important economic indicators.

With a solid foundation for financial and economic policy, it was necessary to reduce inflationary expectations which remained extraordinarily high. The foreign exchange markets, for example, viewed as inevitable a two-fold or even three-fold drop in the value of the ruble by the end of 1995. These expectations were reflected in futures dealing and taken into consideration in contracts for international trade.

The government believed the stabilisation of the money supply and the strict budgetary policy would preserve the existing ruble exchange rate until at least the end of 1995. This logic led to the idea of a "ruble corridor", an exchange rate band which the government and the central bank declared they would defend for the third and fourth quarter of the year.

We knew the strict financial stabilisation measures would inevitably impose acute social and economic strains in some parts of the country. It was important to ensure that none of these escalated into political problems, such as a strike in the important coal industry. To avoid disruption of coal supplies, a high-ranking government delegation went to the most militant strike region. Meetings and negotiations at the mines succeeded in halting the strikes.

But there was also the threat of a crisis in the banking sector, which had been largely created and grown, strong under double-digit monthly inflation. Russian banks and their customers were accustomed to operating in an environment which made it easy to repay loans in devalued rubles. But our success in bringing down inflation to 5.5 per cent a month by June 1995 disrupted this process and made a banking crisis almost inevitable. In one day at the end of August, the daily interest rate on interbank lending rocketed to an annualised rate of 1,000 per cent and the market almost shut down.

If a grenade explodes in the room in which you are sitting it is difficult to know whether the entire city has been destroyed or just your room. With this feeling, we attempted in the course of the first days of the crisis to estimate its dimensions. We were lucky and here I do think we are talking about luck — because the crisis turned out to be relatively moderate. It did not lead to the total collapse of the banking system, although 150 banks lost their licences to operate by the end of the year.

The measures taken at the start of 1995 succeeded in bringing about a dramatic turnaround in the economy of our gigantic country. Inflation declined consistently throughout the year, with the traditional autumn inflationary spurt being avoided for the first time since the start of economic reform. By December, inflation had sunk to a record low of 3.2 per cent a month.

The volume of speculative trading on the currency markets also declined approximately three-fold, and by the end of the year central bank foreign currency reserves were 12 times higher than at the beginning of the year. Russia had fulfilled all its obligations to the IMF, which allowed the signing of an agreement with the London Club for rescheduling its foreign commercial bank debts over 25 years. The fall in production in 1995 was only 3 per cent instead of the expected 10 per cent to 12 per cent.

In December, decisions were adopted on the renewal of the ruble corridor at a new level for six months. The federal budget for 1996 was approved by parliament and signed by the president on December 31.

The results achieved were aimed at long-term goals, but the short-term economic consequences were felt at a politically vulnerable moment — during the run-up to December's parliamentary elections.

Controls on public expenditure and the additional costs incurred in Chechnya caused delays in government payments, including wages for public-sector workers. Inter-enterprise debts, which had declined by June, returned to the January level in the second half of the year, creating delays in their wage payments of up to three months.

The Russian economy entered 1996 in a much stronger — if highly fragile — condition. There are real chances of reducing inflation to 1 per cent a month by the middle of the year, reaching agreement with the IMF on an extended three-year loan facility and with the Paris Club of western government debtors on debt restructuring.

Equally real, unfortunately, are the chances of not reaching an agreement with the IMF and the Paris Club. Worse, there is a danger of populist government expenditure ahead of the presidential election in June that will increase the budget deficit. Such moves would not only give a boost to inflation, they would also lead to a crisis on the foreign exchange and bond markets, and threaten a collapse of the banking system before the election.

If any decision to boost spending will happen it will become clear that my departure from the government last month was more than a change in the membership of the political elite; it would be a change in economic policy capable of inflicting a fatal blow to those who made this decision.

Russia: Davydov Sees 'No Real Progress' With U.S. on Trade

LD0202173996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1620 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By Irina Bolshova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 2 (ITAR-TASS) — The United States can soon become Russia's main trade partner outscoring Ukraine and Germany, experts from the Russian Ministry on Foreign Economic Relations told ITAR-TASS on Friday.

Trade volume between the two countries has been constantly growing in the past few years. In 1995, it increased by nearly 25 percent compared to 1994, reaching a total 7 billion dollars, experts said.

For the first time in several decades, Russia reached in 1994 a favourable balance in its trade with the USA. Three years ago, its export was more than four times lower than its import, whereas now it is 1.7 times higher.

However, no real progress can be seen in solving questions of primary importance to Russia, Oleg Davydov, deputy prime minister told Tass on Friday.

Although the joint statement made by the presidents of the two countries in 1994 officially classified the Russian economy as transitional, the US legislation still refers to Russia as "the country with non-market economy" which accounts for groundlessly tough and unfavourable duty policy, Davydov said.

He noted that the question on giving Russia the most favoured treatment in trade had not been finally solved yet.

Russia: Coal Miners Strike Potentially 'Disastrous'

MM0202140296 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 2 Feb 96 pp 1-2

["Emergency Situation" report: "The Price of the Strike Is Irreparable Losses. Press Statement by 'Rosugol' Company Board"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 31 January there was a board meeting at the "Rosugol" company and a telephone linkup with managers ands trade union leaders in all of Russia's coal-mining regions. Leaders of the Russian Federation Fuel and Energy Ministry and the Russian coal miners trade union took part. The topic of discussion was the Russian coal miners' trade union's announcement of a national strike as of 1 February involving the total suspension of mining operations and shipment of products to consumers.

The "Rosugol" board noted that the strike would lead to disastrous socioeconomic consequences and deprive thousands of working people in the sector of their jobs. The trade union decided to hold the strike despite the fact that in January the Russian Government and president adopted and started to implement decisions to ensure that miners get their pay on time and that coal mining enterprises operate steadily enough. Of the 600 billion rubles [R] set aside for state support for the sector in January, the Russian Federation Finance Ministry has already sent R480 billion to coal enterprises, with another R104 billion to be transferred 31 January. An agreed draft government directive has been prepared and handed to the Finance Ministry containing a schedule for budget financing of the sector in 1996 at the rate of R10.4 trillion. The interdepartmental commission on the socioeconomic problems of coal mining regions has submitted final proposals on the closure of nonviable pits, paying special attention to social protection for redundant working people.

Last year, despite the dire shortage of money, the restructuring of the sector continued and systematic work was done to take miners out of old and very dangerous pits and find them work at profitable modern enterprises. In the past two years production has ceased at 37 loss-making pits where working conditions were hard and work has been done to do away with these enterprises and create new jobs for the redundant working people. High-speed development of promising new fields, where coal will be mined with a high degree of economic efficiency, has begun. World-class mines have been established in Yerunakovskiy Rayon in the Kuzbass, and the "Obukhovskaya-1" and "Shelovskaya" mines in the Donbass, the "Anzherskaya-Yuzhnaya" mine at "Severokuzbassugol," and small open pits in the Far East and on Sakhalin will be commissioned soon.

Detailed work has continued on social programs. In miners' cities and settlements in the past two and one-half years more social facilities and utilities of various kinds have been built and come on stream than in decades past. An additional sector pension has been introduced and more than 4,500 families of miners who are veterans of the North have received free apartments in central areas of Russia.

An extensive program for the social organization of coal mining regions is envisaged for 1996. Gas has to be laid on and the water supply stabilized in cities in Rostov Oblast, construction of heat supply facilities in Inta and purification plants in Vorkuta must continue, and a range of social facilities must be commissioned in Far East areas. The construction of unfinished housing is to be completed very soon, which will make it possible to move around 2,300 miners' families out of dilapidated houses and huts by the spring.

These programs can only be implemented if the sector's enterprises are operating steadily.

The trade union leaders who provoked the miners to take this ill-considered and incorrect step bear full responsibility for the disastrous consequences of the strike.

Russia: Edict on Timely Wage Payments in Public Sector

MM0502102496 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 1

[Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 134, signed by President Yeltsin in Moscow on 1 February 1996: "On Certain Additional Measures To Ensure Timely Payment of Wages to Budget-Sphere Workers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With a view to tightening up controls over the timely and full payment of wages to workers at organizations financed out of budgets at all levels, including servicemen's pay and salaries of officials at Russian Federation internal affairs organs, and to stepping up state financial discipline, I decree that:

1. V.A. Petrov, Russian Federation first deputy finance minister, shall be personally responsible for:

the timely allocation from the federal budget and the remission to recipient organizations of funds used to pay the wages of workers at budget-sphere organizations, including servicemen's pay and the salaries of officials at Russian Federation internal affairs organs;

the implementation of stringent controls over the correct utilization by the recipient organizations of the budget funds used to pay wages and provide remuneration.

2. It shall be laid down that the chairman of the Russian Federation Government shall report once every two weeks to the Russian Federation president on the state of affairs relating to the payment of wages to budget-sphere workers, and on the officials guilty of delaying payment or failing to pay salaries in full.

3. This edict comes into force from the date of its signing.

[Signed] Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin
[Dated] Moscow, the Kremlin, 1 February 1996
No. 134

Russia: 'Critical Food Production Level' Reported

LD0502114996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1109 GMT 5 Feb 96

[By Aleksey Filatov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW February 5 (ITAR-TASS) — Russia has fallen below the critical food production level in 1995 and can lose its food independence, according to experts of the Institute for the research of the market situation.

They told Tass on Monday that food imports comprised 40 per cent of the total food consumption in 1995, while the critical level is considered to be 30 per cent.

"If imports exceed this level, the country becomes dependent on foreign supplies and faces unpredictable circumstances connected with the situation at the world food market", the experts said.

They explained that foreign suppliers can dictate higher prices, offer low-quality food and the result is growing inflation on the home market.

"This is the situation in which Russia found itself today", the experts said adding that the major industrial centres, which consume up to 70-80 per cent of foreign meat and dairy products, face the most critical situation.

Experts of the Agriculture ministry share the view and fear the situation would last for a long time as agricultural production has suffered a serious setback in Russia of late.

Cattle breeding, according to them, is in a major plight as it has slumped to the level of 30-40 years ago and cannot meet the demand for basic foodstuffs.

Ministry experts said only considerable state subsidies to agricultural producers can improve the situation.

International Affairs

Ukraine: Chinese Embassy Protests Expulsion of 3 Nationals

LD0202151796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1344 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 2 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Chinese Embassy in the Ukrainian capital Kiev Friday put out a statement, demanding "a just solution to the question" of the expulsion of three Chinese from Ukraine, and "an early return of the things confiscated from the Chinese specialists."

The Chinese were expelled following their detention on January 29 for actions against Ukraine's security, the press center of the Ukrainian Security Service's department in the Dnepropetrovsk has said, adding that "in disregard of the established rules of control over missile technologies, the Chinese got hold of a number of blue-prints on the development of intercontinental ballistic missile engines for subsequently smuggling the blue-prints out into China."

But according to the Chinese Embassy, "the entire activity of the Chinese citizens during their stay in Ukraine did not go beyond the limits set by appropriate agreements" between the space agencies of the two countries.

As some Ukrainian media are calling the three expelled men "spies," Beijing demands that Kiev refute these false reports as soon as possible and tell the truth about what really happened.

Ukraine: Media Spy Story Dismissed as 'Misunderstanding'

LD0302184696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1635 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 3 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry rejects media stories which accuse three Chinese nationals of hunting for state secrets in the city of Dnepropetrovsk on January 29. It dismisses the media stories as "a misunderstanding."

The Foreign Ministry issued a special statement Saturday to accuse the media of a biased approach to what happened in Dnepropetrovsk and some Ukrainian nationals of "an unauthorized attempt to transmit sensitive information to Chinese experts who arrived in Ukraine on invitation from the Ukrainian authorities." The three Chinese nationals testified as witnesses in the Dnepropetrovsk case, the Foreign Ministry said.

The Ukrainian authorities have made no move to press ungrounded espionage charges against the Chinese, it also said.

The Foreign Ministry hopes the misunderstanding will do no damage to Ukrainian-Chinese relations and says Kiev assigns priority to the promotion of relations with Beijing.

Ukraine: SBU Safeguarded Missile Design From Chinese Nationals

LD0202213096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1936 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 2 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Dnepropetrovsk department of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) prevented three officials from the Shanghai Machine-Building Institute (China) from illegally acquiring documents on missile engine design, SBU press office told Interfax - Ukraine Friday.

The Chinese citizens violated information property rights and the missile technology control regime by receiving a series of documents on missile engines designed by the Yuzhnoye design office from private persons, a press office report reads.

The unauthorized acquisition of these documents by the Chinese citizens could have inflicted political damage to Ukraine as a member of the missile technology control regime, reads the report.

According to the SBU press office, the illegally acquired papers were confiscated during a search with the consent of the Chinese citizens, who could face expulsion with a subsequent five-year ban on entering Ukraine "for activities incompatible with their status."

"Later, taking into consideration the state and prospects of the development of Sino-Ukrainian relations, the foreigners were allowed to freely return home, which they did on January 30," reads the report.

The SBU press office described as "inaccurate" the espionage accusations levelled against the Chinese citizens by some media.

The Chinese Embassy in Kiev issued a statement demanding that the Ukrainian side immediately refute the false reports publicly and provide truthful information on the incident.

Ukraine: Moroz, Primakov Discuss Chernobyl Closure

WS0502102396 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0252 GMT 05 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Feb 3 — The issue of the closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant ought to be raised at the G-7 meeting dedicated to the problems of nuclear safety and scheduled for April in Moscow, it was decided by Ukrainian Parliament Speaker Oleksandr Moroz and Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Yevgeniy Primakov at their meeting in Kiev on Thursday [1 February].

Moroz also said that President Leonid Kuchma must take part in the Moscow conference when "the Chernobyl issue" is examined.

According to Primakov, Russia supports the idea of Ukrainian and Belarusan presidents' participation in the event during discussion on the matter.

The Chernobyl plant's closure is "economically unprofitable" for Ukraine, Moroz said, while Primakov added that "the plant's closure will result in serious economic problems in Ukraine."

Ukraine: Moroz Proposes European Security Conference

WS0502102696 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0003 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Parliament Speaker Oleksandr Moroz suggested that an international conference on problems of European security be conducted in Kiev.

Meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov on Feb. 1, Moroz discussed, among other things, the problem of NATO expansion in Europe. He said, "Ukraine treats with respect the aspiration of some neighboring countries to become members of the North-Atlantic union, but this process should not go at Ukraine's expense."

Moroz said the issues on architecture of a new European security should be discussed at the conference, including "limits of NATO's expansion eastward, the conditions under which Russia considers its security sufficient, and the role and place of Ukraine in the new Europe."

Primakov supported the idea of holding the international conference in Kiev, saying he "understands the position of Ukraine as a non-aligned state not wishing to become a buffer zone between two blocs."

According to Primakov, "NATO's eastward expansion is profitable neither for Russia nor for Ukraine." The Russian minister said NATO can take part in the future structure of European security. "But all the functions of European security should not be passed over to this organization," he said.

Answering a question about the possibility to hold the conference on European security issues in Kiev, Primakov said: "If Ukraine takes upon itself the functions of the inviting party, we have no grounds for objections."

Ukraine: Shmarov Defends Russian Accords at Supreme Council

LD0202204896 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1845 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Ukraine's Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov delivered a report at the closed sitting of the Supreme Council of Ukraine today. The report dealt with the agreements on dividing up the Black Sea Fleet and on military cooperation signed between the Defense Ministries of Ukraine and Russia in 1995-1996, and on the consequences of destroying strategic missile launch silos. The debate on the report lasted for 5 hours. The Supreme Council did not take any decision or resolution on the issue, but took the report into consideration. UNIAN has learned this from reliable sources.

According to the same sources, many questions from deputies dealt with the agreement between the defense ministers of Ukraine and Russia, Valeriy Shmarov and Pavel Grachev, on the sale of Ukrainian bombers Tu-95 and Tu-165 to Russia. Shmarov said such a contract would be to the advantage of Ukraine; however, prices for the aircraft had not yet been set.

The same sources say representatives of nationalist forces in parliament did not address any critical remarks to the minister. Earlier, the Supreme Council Commission for Defense and State Security at its sitting arrived at the conclusion that the Ukrainian-Russian military agreements do not run counter to Ukraine's interests.

Ukraine: Transfer of Black Sea Fleet Properties Confirmed

WS0502111396 Lvov INFOBANK in English 0743 GMT 5 Feb 96

[From the "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sevastopol — On February 10 an order arrived at the address of the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet from Russia's Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev requiring that in the next ten days he transfer his authority over to the First Deputy Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral Gennadiy Suchkov. The decision to remove Admiral Baltin from his post was made during a meeting between the presidents of Ukraine and Russia in Moscow on January 16 (President Yeltsin signed a decree to this effect on January 27).

The press service of Ukraine's Navy told INFOBANK that the Black Sea Fleet's change in command did not affect the process of dividing up ships, weapons, and property from the fleet between Ukraine and Russia which is now taking place. Of the 130 properties included in the coastal infrastructure which should be transferred to Ukraine's Navy, and transfer documents have been signed for 111 of them. Ukraine should soon become the owner of the large landing ship, the Kostyantyn Olshanskyy, and the Taman and Baskunchak search and landing ships. The transfer should be fully completed by March 10.

Ukraine: Kiev Lays Claim to 97 Properties in Russia

WS0202142296 Lvov INFOBANK in English
1305 GMT 2 Feb 96

[From the "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ukraine's State Property Fund has handed documents over to the Russian Federation's State Committee for Property which prove Ukrainian ownership rights to 12 properties located on Russian territory. Among these are three health resorts in the Stavropol kray, four health complexes in the Krasnodar kray, the property complex of Ukraine's Embassy in Moscow, the trade and manufacturing association corporation UkrAhroPromBud (Ukrainian Agrobusiness Construction), the Kharkov forestry industry business (the latter two being located in Russia's Irkutsk oblast), and the UkrTyumenAhroBud (Ukrainian Tyumen Agricultural Construction) and TyumenShlyakhBud (Tyumen Road Construction) groups of enterprises, both of which are located in the Tyumen oblast.

All in all Ukraine has laid claim to 97 properties and businesses on Russian territory while Russia claims to have the right to own 186 on Ukrainian territory. Thus far Russia has not recognized Ukraine's right to any of these. At the same time a protocol has already been signed regarding the regulation of property rights to the Naftovyk health complex in Odessa which Russia hopes to own.

Ukraine: Bosnia Military Cooperation Agreement Signed With France

LD0202183596 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian
1620 GMT 2 Feb 96

[From the Press Service of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry]

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris — On 1 February, an agreement on conditions of military cooperation on the territory of former Yugoslavia was signed between the Defense Ministries of Ukraine and France during the visit by a delegation of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry to the Republic of France. Under the agreement, the French side will partially provide for the logistic support to the 240th Special Ukrainian Battalion, which is part of the multinational forces for the implementation of peace agreements in Bosnia. In particular, France will supply lubricants and some types of food products to the Ukrainian battalion.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Donetsk Miners Accuse Leadership of 'Genocide'

LD0202212996 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian
1940 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Donetsk — Svitlana Derzhak, a consultant of the information department of the SHAKHTAR UKRAYINY [Ukrainian miner] newspaper, has told UNIAR that a rally was held in Donetsk today with the participation of striking miners from Dnepropetrovsk, Lugansk, and Donetsk Regions, and workers of the city of Donetsk. Approximately 5,000 people took part in the rally. They approved a resolution which says, in particular: "The president and the Government of Ukraine are pursuing a policy of genocide in relation to the working people of Ukraine. Bankers will not go on strike; meanwhile, miners — the guard of labor — can hardly survive. The majority of other sections of the population have found themselves in the same situation."

The rally demanded that the wage arrears be settled in full, that violations of the law on labor be stopped, that the law of Ukraine on the remuneration of labor be put into effect in full, that the 1996 state budget provide for state funds to support the coal industry, and that issues raised by the workers of the industry be resolved without delay.

The strike headquarters is ready to hold urgent talks with state structures. The participants in the rally intend to continue the strike until all their demands are met and to call on miners' labor collectives that are not taking part in the strike, as well as on employees of other industries, to join the action under the slogan: "We Are Invincible Until We Are United."

At present, the strike is in progress: 142 out of the 278 enterprises of the coal industry, including automobile service stations, mines, machine-building plants, repair plants, and other enterprises are on strike; 115 enterprises are not shipping their products; 91 mines have stopped their work completely; and 100 mines are not shipping coal. Altogether, 875,000 people took part in the strike today, including people's deputies representing coal mining regions.

Ukraine: 72 Coal Mines Continue Strike 5 Feb

LD0502105096 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
0950 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Donetsk — Seventy-two out of Ukraine's 227 coal mines and open pits are at a standstill; 96 mines are extracting coal, but not shipping it to consumers; 20 mine construction directorates are not functioning. Coal shortages have brought 19 coal-concentrating factories to a standstill. This data on the progress of the miners' strike has been provided today for UNIAN by Viktor Tumanov, deputy chairman of the Central Committee of Ukraine's Trade Union of Coal Industry Employees.

Tumanov said the strike central headquarters would hold a conference at 1400 on the premises of the Ministry of Coal Industry of Ukraine, to be attended by leaders and activists of all miners' trade unions, representatives of coordinating strike workers' committees, and the mass media. The conference will discuss the situation that has arisen in connection with the strike and a program for further actions.

Ukraine: Kuchma Tours Chernigov Region, Meets With Farmers

LD0302002196 Kiev UT-1 Television Network
in Ukrainian 1900 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Reform has not yet begun in the countryside; so far, the countryside has been ruined, Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma said today during his visit to the Chernigov Region. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] We heard women campaigning for collective farms. They were saying: I was born in a collective farm and I would like to die here. Did they manage to persuade you?

[Kuchma] They did, because I really do believe that the future belongs to collective farms. This is our way of life here, in Ukraine. However, the future belongs to collective farms that consist of private owners, each possessing his own plot of land. In this case, more people will be interested in it.

Most of all, I liked people's mood. After all, people believe in their future, in the future of our state. This is our greatest achievement. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] The discussion of agricultural issues was continued at a conference of leaders of agricultural and processing enterprises. The head of the Chernigov Region state administration Petro Shapoval, delivered a report on the state of affairs in the agro-industrial complex in the Region. Summing up the conference, Leonid Kuchma paid attention to the progress of the land reform.

[Kuchma] The final objective of the land reform should be the establishment of real ownership of agricultural lands, on the basis of a single principle: the lands should belong to those who work on it, who wish to work in agriculture, who have either experience of work in agriculture or appropriate education.

The possibility that land can be either bought or sold evokes most apprehensions. They say, if land if privatized, local and foreign tycoons will buy it up. Therefore, I would like to emphasize again that land certificates are issued without allocating plots of land. The owner of the certificate can receive a plot of land in his possession only after he or she withdraws from a collective farm. Meanwhile, the farmers who remain in the collective farm, will continue to work their land as a single tract. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Proposals put forward by the participants in the conference will be systematized and passed to the government for it to introduce amendments and addenda to the national program for the reform of the agro-industrial complex. [end recording]

Ukraine: Justice Minister Cautions Communist Party on Referendum

LD0302235496 Kiev UT-1 Television Network
in Ukrainian 1900 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ukrainian Justice Minister Serhiy Holovatyy has made a statement in connection with plans by the leaders of the Communist Party of Ukraine to raise signatures in support of an all-Ukrainian referendum on the main provisions of the Ukrainian constitution. The statement says that this is taking place despite the Central Electoral Commission's 26 October 1995 legal ruling on the issue. The commission ruled that the action violated the law on nationwide and local referendums and the provisions of the constitutional treaty.

[Begin Holovatyy recording] According to Article 25 of the Law of Ukraine on public associations, the Ministry of Justice, as the registering body, exercises control and supervision over adherence to the law by political parties and public associations registered with the ministry. The ministry has been receiving reports that the Communist Party of Ukraine, represented by its governing bodies, is taking a number of measures to initiate an all-Ukrainian referendum on certain provisions of the constitution. In this connection, the Ministry of Justice has documents in its possession which prove the party's governing bodies direct involvement in planning the action.

Relying on the Central Electoral Commission 26 October ruling that a campaign to initiate such a referendum by citizens is not envisaged by Ukrainian legislation, and having inspected the essence of issues intended for the referendum, which the ministry regards as infringement on the existing constitutional system in Ukraine, and having inspected the contents of the referendum petition, one of whose paragraphs contains a clear attempt to interfere with the activities of state authorities — which is forbidden to public associations and political parties — the Ministry of Justice has concluded that there is every reason for concern at the current activities of the Communist Party's governing bodies.

Therefore, in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, and given a ruling by the Prosecutor General's Office on the illegal nature of such actions, the Ministry of Justice will be forced to consider sanctions against the Communist Party of Ukraine on the basis of the law on public associations.

The Ministry of Justice is worried that such actions of the governing bodies and individual members of the Communist Party of Ukraine will upset the political stability and balance established in Ukrainian society last year by the constitutional treaty between the Supreme Council and the president of Ukraine, which allowed for favorable conditions to be created for the finalization of the Ukrainian constitution and a nationwide referendum on the constitutional draft that is currently being agreed upon by the president and the Supreme Council. I believe all Ukrainian citizens will treat this statement with understanding. Until Ukraine has formally established its independence and democracy in the constitution, it is advisable to refrain from any provocative actions against the state, the existing constitutional order, political peace and civic accord in the country. [end recording]

Ukraine: Moroz on Land Privatization Decree

LD0502122796 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
0950 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Supreme Council Chairman Oleksandr Moroz will raise the issue of the future of the president's decree on accelerating privatization in the agro-industrial complex, which was issued in October 1994. Moroz said this today to a seminar of deputy chairmen of district state administrations, devoted to issues of the agro-industrial complex.

Moroz said the ideology set out in the decrees and subsequently in the draft national programme for the development of Ukraine's agro-industrial complex is threatening the state's national security. The parliament speaker said he would initiate a meeting between President Leonid Kuchma, leaders of relevant parliamentary commissions, and Oleksandr Tkachenko, first deputy chairman of the Supreme Council, so that they may reach an agreement on the need to introduce amendments to the decree on accelerating privatization in the agro-industrial complex.

Moroz believes that land relations in Ukraine should be based on laws only, and, given the president's consent, the Supreme Council will be ready to introduce certain amendments to the Land Code of Ukraine, in line with the president's decree.

Ukraine: Parliament To Discuss Elimination of Missile Launchers

LD0202140396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1227 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, February 2 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada intends to call at 13:00 on Friday a closed meeting to hear Defence Minister Valeriy Shmarov's information about the agreements signed in 1995 between the military departments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation as regards the division of the Black Sea Fleet and the two countries' military cooperation.

As an "IF-U parliamentary correspondent reports, the legislature also intend to discuss the results of the elimination of silo launchers of strategic missiles in Pervomaysk (Mykolayiv region)."

As "IF-U" was told in interview by Oleh Chernousenko, member of the parliamentary committee in charge of defence and national security, the Ministry's information can only be taken into consideration, since the agreements signed are not subject to ratification by Parliament.

On November 25, 1995, Ukrainian Minister of Defence Valeriy Shmarov and his Russian counterpart Pavel Grachev signed around 20 bilateral agreements in the field of military cooperation, and agreed upon the schedule for turning over separate BSF [Black Sea Fleet] facilities to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Russia.

On January 5 this year, Ukrainian, Russian and the US Defence Ministers attended the ceremony of blowing up an ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missile] silo launcher in Pervomaysk, where the 43-th rocket army is stationed. The fact arose criticism on the part of some parliamentarians, who believe that the elimination of launchers damages Ukraine's interests.

Before November 1998, Ukraine is to eliminate 36 per cent of her silo launchers (a total of 176).

Ukraine: Kuchma Grants 'Broad Powers' to Crimean Envoy

LD0302213196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2104 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Lev Ryabchikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SIMFEROPOL, February 4 (Itar-Tass) - Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has appointed deputy Dmytro Stepanyuk as his envoy to Crimea and granted him broad powers.

Stepanyuk, who will replace Valeriy Gorbatov, will be accountable directly to the president and the Ukrainian government.

His task will be to advise Kiev on the annulment of the Crimean government's decisions which run counter to the Ukrainian legislation.

The broadening of the envoy's powers has caused protest in the Crimean leadership which intends to appeal to Kuchma to reconsider his decision.

Ukraine: Franchuk Quits as Crimean Premier

LD0202182896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1756 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SIMFEROPOL, February 2 (Itar-Tass) — Anatoliy Franchuk steps down as prime minister of the Ukrainian enclave of the Crimea in the face of major reshuffles in the Crimean government by the Ukrainian leadership.

Five candidates for taking over his post went to Kiev with Crimean parliament chairman Yevheniy Suprunyuk.

Back from the Ukrainian capital, Suprunyuk said none of the candidates had been given an audience by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma or Deputy Prime Minister Yevheniy Franchuk.

Leaving Kiev, Franchuk told reporters that the Ukrainian leadership's rushy reshuffles in the Crimean government were underlined by the start of the privatisation programme in the Crimea.

The new Kiev-installed government will not last long, Franchuk said, adding that in this situation he is glad to quit, to take his seat in the Ukrainian parliament.

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Moroz Says 1996 Budget Adoption 'Catastrophic'

LD0502105396 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0950 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — "The situation as regards adoption of the 1996 state budget is catastrophic. The government is already correcting macroeconomic indices of the draft budget," Supreme Council Chairman Oleksandr Moroz told a seminar of deputy chairmen of district state administrations today. The seminar was devoted to issues of the agro-industrial complex.

He said an agreement has been reached with the government that the value-added tax would be given the status of a nationwide tax within the limits of 20 percent, and that it would be made effective from 1 January 1997.

The parliament speaker said it had been agreed with the Cabinet of Ministers that the Supreme Council Commission for Financial Affairs and Banking will be the only source of establishing taxes. Parliament will definitely finish adopting all tax laws in 1996, Moroz said.

Ukraine: Agriculture Minister Views U.S. Credit

AU0202153596 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 30 Jan 96 p 3

[Interview with Pavlo Haydutskyy, Ukraine's minister of agriculture and foodstuffs, by unidentified URYADOVYY KURYER correspondent; place and date not given: "The State Guarantees and Villagers Will Not Let Us Down"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [URYADOVYY KURYER] In January and February, oblast conferences will be held to discuss issues of agro-industrial policy. What questions will be raised there and what results do you expect from provinces?

[Haydutskyy] We expect that oblast conferences will introduce amendments into the Draft National Program for the Development of Agricultural Production in 1996-2005. Concurrently, we are preparing a major conference in February with heads of agricultural enterprises. Some people question the expediency of holding such a conference. I will say unambiguously: It is logical that the president wants to seek advice from producers and heads of agricultural enterprises. Even though they may be supporters of different political trends, economic and management problems will occupy a major place. Of course, it would be best if we are not just told about the acuteness of those problems, but also hear proposals on how to resolve them.

[URYADOVYY KURYER] On the New Year's eve, an accord was signed on granting yet another U.S. credit for the needs of the agro-industrial complex. Where will this money be channeled?

[Haydutskyy] This credit has become, to some extent, traditional. The next tranche will be $20 million. Last year, there were certain problems because it took a long time to find the borrower of such a credit, and then the borrower took a long time to procure the necessary documents in view of the serious requirements for property mortgaging. We are used to being guided by old procedures. The main requirement is the feasibility of returning the money. The problem is that we do not have either a competition of claimants to credits or experience in the relevant paperwork.

[URYADOVYY KURYER] Not much time remains until the spring field work, and there are more than enough problems with preparing for that work. Last year's procedure in the provision of fuel and lubricants, when state structures only supplied 7 or 8 percent of all energy sources and the rest was provided through commercial structures, proved justified. Perhaps, the state should abandon commercial activity. And then we will have enough fuel, lubricants, mineral fertilizers, and spare parts?

[Haydutskyy] The state will hardly be able to help villagers in the provision with fuel. For this, initial capital is required. The only source from which money might be taken is the budget, but we know that there are no funds for this in the budget. That is why one can only rely upon commercial structures that supply fuel, are familiar with the market, and have experience of work. The state may only provide guarantees or support. We hope that the government decree that has been adopted "On Commodity Credits" will also promote a normalization of this process. The role of local bodies of executive power is also rising. They may also become a serious guarantor of returning those funds that were used for purchasing fuel, lubricants, and so on, or of products worth a certain sum of money. It is encouraging that there is now competition among commercial structures.

[URYADOVYY KURYER] It is planned that, in 1996, the volume of agricultural production will grow by 0.2 percent. Of course, this is not much, but such a trend is positive anyway. What is this optimism based on?

[Haydutskyy] We generally envisage much more resources than 0.2 percent. More machinery, mineral fertilizers, and herbicides will be purchased and the fuel supply will be normalized. However, the main resources — the hard work and perseverance of our villagers — are widely known.

[URYADOVYY KURYER] Incidentally, how are the crops feeling this winter?

[Haydutskyy] Climatic conditions are now favorable for winter crops. Just so-called ice "saucers" ["blyudtsya"] present a certain danger. It is an ice crust that forms in some fields after rain and is airproof. Quite soon, we will inspect fields to see how much of the crops may die or become affected by the condition.

Ukraine: Pynzekyk Calls For Continued Tight Monetary Policy

WS0502102496 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0252 GMT 05 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lvov, Feb 3 — Deputy Prime Minister on economic issues Viktor Pynzenyk, speaking over the weekend in Lvov, called on Ukraine to continue the tight money policies it carried out last year. "The tough monetary stand of the government is starting to give positive results right this year," said Pynzenyk at a meeting with entrepreneurs.

The deputy prime minister applauded Ukraine's accomplishments in keeping a lid on inflation last year, noting that 1995's monthly inflation rate averaged 9.1 percent, or 181.7 percent for the entire year, while the figures for 1994 were 28.9 percent per month, or 2,001 percent for the year and 1993 inflation totaled 10,055 percent.

This year, the government hopes for an annual inflation rate of 34 percent, he said.

At a press conference, conducted in the oblast administration building, Pynzenyk said "the tendency of constant decline in living standards has been overcome in 1995."

According to Pynzenyk, the dollar equivalent of the average Ukrainian wage had been on the rise since October 1994.

Stabilization measures have resulted in a strengthening of the national currency, he said. As of Jan. 1, the volume of commercial bank deposits totaled KBV423 [karbovantsi] trillion (some $2.3 billion).

Ukraine: Conglomerate To Help Finance Chernobyl Closure

WS0502102596 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0252 GMT 05 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Feb 3 — A draft presidential decree placing the Koncern Energiya industrial-financial conglomerate in charge of constructing alternative power sources to replace Chernobyl nuclear power plant has been submitted for review by affected ministries and departments.

According to the decree, Energiya concern is going to increase natural gas extraction in Ukraine to 10 billion cubic meters a year in order to supply conventional power plants with fuel. In addition, in order to provide Chernobyl personnel with jobs, the firm will construct a plant producing radioactive waste containers and radiation-proof appliances and robot machinery not far from the town of Slavutych.

Energiya is supposed to finance all these projects at the expense of its own resources and the attraction of domestic and foreign investors.

The total volume of investment necessary for substituting for Chernobyl's power from 1996 to 2010 will be $15.7 billion, including $9.7 billion in assets appearing from tax benefits given to the concern's enterprises.

In accordance with the decree, the firm's efforts on the project will be tax exempt. Energiya will also be able to use both its own property and Ukraine's natural gas resources to secure investments, according to a report in City newspaper.

In addition, a number of enterprises are supposed to be transferred to the concern's management (the Chernobyl nuclear plant in particular). They should be privatized during 1996 (51 per cent of Chernobyl nuclear power plant stock will belong to the state).

Belarus

Belarus: Visiting Primakov on U.S. START II Ratification

WS0202155096 Minsk BTK Television Network in Belarusian 1900 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Report by I. Sushkevich]

[FBIS Translated Text] The guest [Primakov] gave his last press conference, planned for the first half of the day of the intensive visit, in the airport before his departure. Journalists did not have the opportunity to ask all their questions, although the two foreign ministry heads tried to be brief. In addition, the Russian [foreign minister] stressed that while at his previous position, he was:

[Begin recording] [Primakov, finishing reporter's sentence] less talkative than today, I must say.

Yevgeniy Primakov emphasized that he is very pleased with the progress of the visit and negotiations with the country's top leaders. In his words, apart from political issues, they discussed the philosophy of integration processes during their meetings. The minister rejected statements by journalists about possible secrets surrounding his talks.

[Primakov] We are for open diplomacy, but not to the point where absolutely everything is disclosed to the press. Belarus is a country displaying a desire to actively start integration processes on CIS territory. We have had no critical situations that had to be examined or solved.

As is known, Russia was recently waiting for a U.S. Congress decision on ratification of the START Treaty. The treaty has been ratified. The ratification of START II is necessary for Russia... [recording cut] Naturally, [the Russian] Duma may have to fulfill some additional conditions. But we hope that the treaty, very substantial in itself, will not undergo any revision. [end recording]

Primakov stressed that he had reached full understanding with Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko, and he anticipates cooperation between the two foreign ministries' services to help as a consolidating element of foreign activities.

Belarus: Sharetski-Primakov Hold 31 Jan Meeting

WS0202153096 Minsk BTK Television Network in Belarusian 1900 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Report by V. Kharkow]

[FBIS Translated Text] It should be noted that Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's visit was the first official visit by the Russian diplomatic chief to CIS countries. That Yevgeniy Primakov first visited Belarus can be viewed as a sign of the priority he gives to relations with CIS countries. On his second day in Minsk, the foreign minister met with Belarusian Supreme Soviet Chairman Syamyon Sharetski. The topic of integration, as well as restoration and development of relations that do not violate the principles of sovereignty, again became central during the meeting. The Belarusian parliament speaker had an interesting view of this matter.

[Begin Sharetski recording] It is one thing to be sovereign, that is, to have the right to decide one's own fate. But it is another thing to be independent, something that is so much talked about. As a matter of fact, there are no independent countries. There are sovereign countries, but not independent ones. And Belarus and Russia seem to be very dependent on each other. [end recording]

In the opinion of Syamyon Sharetski, it is important now to fill with concrete content the integration process. Such institutions as the Supreme Soviet, State Duma, or the Council of Federations could play a prominent role here. Yevgeniy Primakov clearly assessed Russian-Belarusian cooperation, describing such relations as strategic in the policies of the two countries.

Belarus: Special Group To Consider Participation in UN Operations

WS0202153696 Minsk BELAPAN in English 1413 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to information received, an interdepartmental group is being formed under the Belarusian Security Council to consider questions concerning the expediency of Belarus' participation in peace-keeping operations under the aegis of the United Nations Organization. The group is to finish within a month. Among the members of the group are representatives of all ministries and departments concerned. They are led by the deputy state secretary of the Security Council, Anatol Tozik. The group is also to draw conclusions about the most suitable forms of such participation, and about its effect on the state budget. Proposals made by the interdepartmental group will be submitted for consideration by the Security Council, the President and the Supreme Soviet. It is not ruled out that this problem will be proposed for discussion by large sections of the public.

Belarus: Lukashenka on Integration With Russia

LD0202225896 Moscow Programma Radio Odin Network in Russian 1100 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Interview with Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka by Petr Makritskiy and unidentified correspondent; Lukashenka and Makritskiy in Minsk, correspondent in Moscow — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] [passage omitted] The subject matter of the meeting today between President Lukashenka and our radio audience is the following: Belarus and Russia, ways of integration. [passage omitted]

[Makritskiy] I am very pleased that today, in Russia, here in Belarus, and in other countries, people will hear live, from the horse's mouth so to speak, what is understood under a closer integration, how the ways for Belarus and Russia to draw closer together are seen. As for the aspiration for such integration, you, Alyaksandr Rygoravich, have stated it more than once and we all understand that it is impossible to do without it. Is it not the case, however, that, before the visit of Yevgeniy Primakov, head of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry, to Minsk, there had been, in my opinion, more initiatives from the Belarusian side than reciprocal steps by Russia? It is still Russia's turn to act, as you said at the CIS heads meeting in Moscow. I give the microphone to you now, Alyaksandr Rygoravich.

[Lukashenka] Esteemed radio listeners, dear friends. Before I answer this specific question, I would like to address my Russian brothers, my compatriots living not only in Belarus but also in Russia, to all the nations of the former USSR who are now independent states as good old friends. The radio has brought us very close together and I can say openly that there have been no cases when I refused your request to appear on this channel, even when it was not convenient for me. I have always come to this studio and have always considered it my duty and honor to speak to Russians and Belarusians. I like talking to you. Belarusians feel and have felt mutual feeling of closeness toward our Russian brothers.

Today's topic has been determined by life itself, our time which is difficult but not without hope. I think that our purpose is clear: we have indeed made very significant steps lately. These include the referendum when Belarus was still part of the USSR and the referendum in May 1995 which clearly answered all the questions and defined the orientation of the Belarusian nation. Now the situation is such that having made these significant steps we are entitled to expect reciprocal steps from fraternal Russia. I will be open. Petr Fedorovich [Makritskiy] was right to say that there have been too many initiatives lately but not enough, I am stressing not enough, specific steps. The ball is now indeed in the court of the Russian Federation.

I think that after the visit of Yevgeniy Maksimovich Primakov and our negotiations and meetings with him we have discussed all the issues and I think that in the near future there will be specific and I would even say significant moves on the part of Russia and Belarus toward each other. The Russian foreign affairs minister stated that I will meet the president of the Russian Federation in the near future in Moscow and, maybe, we will not just define and deepen, as we normally term it, but will already take specific and very sizeable steps which will allow us to talk in terms of implementing our links and directions toward integration. You are asking about the ways. I will say directly. You yourself defined the ways in your speech, Vladimir Mikhaylovich, in your introduction. You remember you said: this disintegration has most of all affected people. Therefore our steps will be directed at ensuring that our people will be happy with these integration links.

A year ago the Belarusian and Russian leadership removed all those border barriers which were constructed on the border. The reaction was prompt. People reacted very positively to that. In the vicinity of Orsha and Smolensk no one barges into train compartments and inspect the possessions of our people who travel to Minsk or Moscow. This is a great step.

Now we must make significant steps in the economic areas through the creation of joint ventures, financial and industrial groups, as we call them, in order to link economic entities and to return to the level which we had during the imperial, as some call it, time — I am not inclined to consider it as such — as it was during the Soviet times, to return to that level at least. People will see that we are not just talking about integration but are doing something in that direction. I must tell you that we are making significant steps. Journalists are not talking about that yet, the steps towards unification of legislation. A great deal has been done there. I must say that we have fully unified customs legislation. If you like, the customs union between Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan today is a single economic state. We have returned to the framework of three states so far. I think that fraternal Ukraine will join in. I am sure that the economic problems they are dealing with there are of much interest for the leadership of Ukraine and I am convinced that in economy too we will soon make the most serious steps. To conclude this passage, the main thing is that these steps should be made today without fear. For that only one thing is needed — political will. After all, the direction has been set, therefore one should move in that direction and not stand and wait while someone hits us from the left and the right and criticism starts flooding in. [passage omitted]

[Makritskiy] Many people, including our compatriots who live outside the republic, would like to know, to see through your eyes, the real picture of affairs in Belarus, how political and economic problems are being solved there — especially now that January has just ended. It was full of events.

[Lukashenka] It was a very busy month. It is the busiest month of the year, both in Russia and Belarus. It is the new year now, production is just beginning to unfold. In January-February, even in the first quarter, production volumes as a rule fall, and then start picking up. I think that at the moment we have not got exact figures. I think that in Belarus this fall will be very insignificant. I even expect that we will preserve the production volumes at the level of January 1995. For us it will be a great success. As for politics, I do not think that there were any extraordinary events, if we do not take into consideration specific meetings and visits, especially the one by Yevgeniy Primakov, and then by the Ukrainian minister. We had working contacts which should lead to a large political explosion of activity; this is likely to take place at the end of February and beginning of March. Routine work is being carried out which will lead to large-scale visits; these will result in the signing of specific agreements. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] A question from Vasiliy Ivanovich Fokin who asks about the attitude of President Lukashenka to hostile actions against the unity between Belarus and Russia on the part of Gaydar and democrats who are in every way seeking to prevent this union. If we sum up this question it will probably read: What do you think about opposition opinions on the unification between Russia and Belarus?

[Lukashenka] I understand Vasiliy Ivanovich very well. He is writing about Gaydar and others. I must say that Vasiliy Ivanovich has grounds for this and he is probably well informed. You know that Gaydar visited Minsk last year. Mind you, he did not find time to meet the leadership of Belarus, although I always meet the Russians — opposition members and all, whoever comes. Therefore he is right in saying what he says. I was surprised to hear the statement of Gaydar who visited Belarus and could not find a single good word to say about Belarus. He met similar opposition members here, made a statement calling on international community to block Belarus out. You, Vladimir, probably do not know about it. A document exists in Belarus, which was signed by Gaydar, in which he condemns the policy of the president of Belarus, draws the attention of the West to it, proposes that it should block Belarus out, and almost goes as far as to propose that they should introduce sanctions against Belarus. What should I think about that? You probably understand it very well. But on the whole I see the existence of opposition opinions as part of reality. You cannot escape from it. I must say that I take those opinions into consideration. I follow my own path, however. In the referendum people clearly defined the direction for me to follow. I listen to people. I am concerned when I am criticized. Sometimes I do not deserve the criticism I get; you know it hurts me as it would others.

[Correspondent] We have a very interesting question here asked by Tatyana Nikolayevna from Moscow. It concerns economic integration. She believes that this integration would be more complete if the economic reform in Belarus levels out with Russian reforms. Have you noticed, a very fundamental issue is touched upon here — the discrepancy between the levels of economic development which, in particular, hampers closer integration within the CIS. Can you please clarify this question and describe the economic situation in Belarus now?

[Lukashenka] I am surprised that Tatyana Nikolayevna should ask this question, because this is trying to connect what cannot be connected so far. The question may concern the reforms, but I cannot understand why economic development should be made dependent on reforms. You know I would not say that Russia has made such great progress as far as reforms are concerned and, as a result of these reforms, in its economic development. The same here. Economic development in Belarus is exactly the same as the economic development of the Russian Federation because the economy of Belarus is an assembly line of the Soviet Union. [passage omitted]

As for reforms, I would like Tatyana Nikolayevna to specify exactly what reforms she means. If she means what we are always reproached for by the West, which says that we have no liberalization of external trade, price liberalization is going slowly, because we have not freed prices, that our unemployment rate is only 2 percent and not 12 or 20 — I did not promise such things in my election campaign. I am trying in every way to preserve jobs. I demand from management of enterprises of all forms of ownership — private, state, and joint stock — so that they should keep people in jobs. This is considered an anti-market measure. Let them. Yesterday, I received the credentials of the British ambassador; when she touched upon this issue I said that in Belarus only those reforms have been carried out and will be carried out which bring happiness and prosperity to our Belarusian people and those with whom we have close cooperation now. [passage omitted]

[Lukashenka] [passage omitted] Our policy toward integration with the fraternal Russia is not only a means of getting out of the economic crisis. Not just that, although I am not denying it. I am convinced that we will never overcome the economic crisis if we do not begin to cooperate fully with the Russian Federation. We can manufacture our goods from Russian materials and can sell them mainly on the market with which we have always worked. The West is not waiting for us, although we have managed, with difficulty, to increase our deliveries to the West by 20 percent, but this has cost us such an effort that I cannot see any further prospects there. [passage omitted]

[Makritskiy] Question from Kazimir Kavalewski from Vitebsk Region: How did we benefit from the customs union?

[Lukashenka] I must say that the customs union has made us to concede to the Russian Federation. I must admit that there have been certain losses there. But this union has also benefited Belarus. I will give you only one example: today we receive oil $12 cheaper than other foreign countries, including Ukraine, which receives oil at a higher price. We have made concessions to Russia and, on the other hand, Russia has made concessions to us. [passage omitted]

[Makritskiy] A question from Grodno, Syamen Miklashevich, pensioner, somewhat changes the direction of our conversation. He writes in his note: you resolutely oppose the expansion of NATO to the east. Do not you have a feeling that Moscow will once more let the Belarusians down? The Kremlin will give in to pressure from Washington and we will be left alone with our special opinion, special opinion is in quotation marks.

[Correspondent] There is a similar question from Ivan Ivanovich Shubin from Kostroma: does President Lukashenka believe that military cooperation is necessary between Belarus and Russia in order not to let the West show us the corner and kick us around?

[Lukashenka] As for military cooperation between Russia and Belarus — does the Russian Federation need cooperation with Belarus? Is there a single Russian military union between Moscow and the western border of Belarus which will cover the western direction? Believe me, there is not a single Russian unit apart from the Belarusian Army, which is the former Belarusian military district which was the best equipped and trained for modern military actions. This is the answer to your question — Russia will not create a cover for its interests in the western direction without Belarus today. Therefore the Russian Federation needs this cooperation. Do we need military cooperation with the Russian Federation? Without doubt, we do, because our army will be weak and incomplete without cooperation with the Russian Federation, both in the military and technical sphere and in the sphere of material and technical support. Everything is well arranged and well connected there. Thank God that the military, unlike the politicians, have not broken off their relations. I understand them and support them very strongly.

As for the question of Miklashevich about the movement of NATO to the east and the giving way of the Russian Federation to the West, so that we will be on our own against them, I must say that Russia will not give way to anyone and that on the whole it is our position of principle. We declared it straight away a year and a half ago, without waiting to hear the position of the Russian Federation, and we are adhering to this position without deviations. I am happy that when Yevgeniy Primakov was in Minsk he stated unambiguously that the Russian Federation will not stand quietly watching while NATO moves to the east. It will lead only to one thing — opposition of blocs. I am convinced of that without doubt because sooner or later this bloc will be formed in the east to balance off the NATO bloc. You know, they are joking with us, but I will tell the radio listeners of Russia and Belarus a small secret for. They say that in 1996 there will be no movement, we will wait and see, and so on. These are lies; the NATO infrastructure has already appeared on the borders of Belarus. Today, intensive monitoring is being carried out over the territory of Belarus and all those troops stationed on the territory of Belarus, including Russian troops. Therefore we are just being lulled in this respect. I apologize, Vladimir Mikhaylovich, that I have to speak about this. We must perceive things realistically. We should not destroy our army; at least they do not do this in the West. [passage omitted]

[Makritskiy] A question from Lipski from Grodno: I am sure that the conflict between the branches of power will be over when the whole nation votes for the Constitution. Do you intend to hold a referendum on the Constitution?

[Lukashenka] I must say with all sincerity to Comrade Lipski from Grodno that we are now preparing a proposal for the Supreme Soviet directed at perfecting our Constitution, proceeding from the knowledge of its shortcomings we have acquired over the time that has passed. Of course if the Supreme Soviet is not able to accept these amendments the president will have to resort to a national referendum on the Constitution. When the people vote for the main norms of this Constitution, there will be no more arguing about who is right — the people have decided and both the president and the parliament must follow the set direction. Therefore such an option is possible. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Vladimir Ivanovich Zotov from Moscow asks about the opinion of the Belarusian president on the war in Chechnya.

[Lukashenka] If I can, I will answer this question from emotional reasons, not like a president but like a human being. I want to see this conflict resolved and I am prepared to do everything that either a Russian or a Belarusian would tell me to do to stop this conflict. I am prepared to block the fire with my own body if I could stop this awful inflammation on the body of our Russian person. I am very hurt by this drama although I have a huge amount of information. The president of Russia has shared all these problems with me. During his visit, Pavel Grachev, with whom we have good relations, also informed me. You know my attitude to this problem, but I would not like to moan like they often do in Belarus or Russia. I think that it is possible to find a way out of this situation if everybody in Russia comes to want it. As for me, I am stressing it again, I am prepared to do everything Russians may tell me in order to put an end to this conflict, to ensure a peaceful solution to this problem.

[Correspondent] There is another question: What does the president of Belarus think about the buying and selling of arable land, rivers, lakes, forests, and so on?

[Lukashenka] As a person who grew up on this land I have an extremely negative attitude to this. Land which produces bread, vegetables, and fruit must be the property of the state. No one has the right to trade and speculate in this land. We allow long-term leasing of land. As for private property on kitchen gardens, we have had private property on them for a long time. We have been trading in land for a long time when this or that house in a town or in a village has been sold. When it is sold the price is formed with the account of the value of the land. There is private property on those plots of land. As for arable land, there is no such problem either in Russia or in Belarus. One should not push this problem to the rank of a state problem. One should stop playing politics where land is concerned.

[Makritskiy] This question returns us to the global problems of the relations between Russia and Belarus: I read here and there that any day now we will have a confederation between Russia and Belarus. How realistic is this?

[Lukashenka] I must say absolutely openly: we may any day now have not just a confederation but a union never known by the world before and which will be more powerful and solid than the Soviet Union. Today, however, this is not the issue in the relations between Russia and Belarus. If we build our relations proceeding from some theoretical and ideological forms, such as a return to the Soviet Union, creation of a confederation or a federation, we will never create anything. Today, we must solve specific and down to earth problems, the problems concerning human beings, the economy, manufacturing, the unification of legislation, to create in the economy supranational separate bodies which will control these common flows both in the manufacturing and in the financial spheres. Believe me, when we begin to solve these specific issues we will not fail to arrive at some formula: maybe it will be a federation or a confederation, maybe it will be a union similar to the EU. Why should one issue orders from above today? This always frightens off part of the population. This is not the way to proceed in integration; one should proceed from below, from an individual. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] What is the difference between the minimum and maximum wage in Belarus?

[Lukashenka] The gap between the top and the bottom wages in Belarus is huge. The average wage is now approximately $90, $86-$90. The highest wages are earned here by bankers and builders — $200-$220 in the construction industry, according to the data of 1995, and in banking, as the statistical data show, $400-$500 plus dividends on shares and so on, we are trying to find out ourselves what they get. As for the lowest wages, I mean 400,000 rubles and less, only 0.5 percent of the population receive such wages, according to the official data for 1995. However, I must admit that we have incidents of non-payment of wages for a month or two, and for three and three and a half months in the agricultural sphere. There are few such enterprises, though. I signed a decree a month and a half ago requiring all the enterprises in Belarus to pay what is owed to people by 10 February. [passage omitted]

Moldova

Moldova: Dniester President Asks Yeltsin Help To Join CIS

LD0202195596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1612 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TIRASPOL, Feb 2 (Interfax) — The president and the Supreme Soviet of the self-proclaimed Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic has asked the Russian president and parliament to assist Transdniestria's membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

"The Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic, created on September 2, 1990, in line with the popular will, has been living and developing for over five years. Today's realities indicate that its people have a common history and fate with the fraternal Russian people," says the appeal, made public on Friday.

Realizing the importance of further development of integration processes inside the Commonwealth of Independent States, the republic maintains close contacts with many CIS countries. The relations with Russia, which consumes around 80 percent of the products it manufactures, have always been of prime importance in this direction.

President Igor Smirnov and the parliament asked their Russian counterparts to recommend that the CIS leaders accept Transdniestria as a CIS member.

They also ask for economic assistance, because "the unresolved problem of the republic's political status, economic difficulties, and various obstacles created by Moldova affect the situation in the region."

Moldova: CIS Secretariat Fails To Admit Dniester to CIS

LD0302201296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1635 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHISINAU, Feb 3 (Interfax) — The CIS Executive Secretariat has refused to admit the self-proclaimed Transdniester Moldovan Republic to the Commonwealth of Independent States, a CIS deputy executive secretary said in a letter to Transdniester Republic President Igor Smirnov.

The letter was circulated at a press conference in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, Saturday.

Smirnov has requested the CIS heads of state and the CIS Executive Secretariat to admit the Transdniester Moldovan Republic to the CIS. The self-proclaimed republic held a corresponding referendum on December 24, 1995, during which the majority of Transdniester residents said they favored joining the CIS.

"The issue itself contradicts the CIS Charter which reads that the CIS member states build their relations in line with the principle of territorial integrity and renounce any actions which could split the territory of a foreign country," the CIS official said. "The Republic of Moldova of which the Transdniester region is an integral part became a CIS member state at the moment when the Moldovan parliament ratified the CIS Charter," the CIS deputy executive secretary repeated.

Moldova: Snegur Interviewed on Prospects for Settlement

LD0202210496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1741 GMT 2 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In an exclusive interview with Interfax, President Snegur speaks about the prospects and mechanism of settling the conflict in the Transdniester region and about the political and economic situation in Moldova as a whole.

[INTERFAX] The joint statement on an early settlement in Transdniester, signed by you and the presidents of Russia and Ukraine, notes that the leaderships of the three countries will adopt all necessary measures to speed up the drafting and signing of "a document, determining the special status of Transdniester as part of the single and territorially integral republic of Moldova." What measures concretely are meant and how effective can they be in your opinion?

[Snegur] As any political conflict goes through different stages of development and settlement, approaches to the problems that crop up differ, too. It is impossible to work out a single plan for all situations.

For this reason, I think it is too early now to speak about concrete measures toward a final solution to the Transdniester crisis. Further actions will actually depend on the positions of the sides concerned. But regardless of anything, actions will be political, and their aim will be to restrain the "irreconcilable" Transdniester leaders.

Measures will be gradually worked out and specified during three-sided consultations at various levels, involving experts, ministries, governments, presidents, if needed. There will be a lot to do for Moldova, Russian, and Ukrainian diplomats. But their chief task will be to advise their leaders on each concrete stage of overall settlement.

Q.: What did you expect from a meeting with the Transdniester leader Igor Smirnov, slated for January 31st?

A.: Upon my return from Moscow, where Yeltsin, Kuchma, and I signed a declaration on an early political settlement in Transdniester, I offered Igor Smirnov to meet in Tiraspol on January 31st without any preconditions.

What was principally important for me was the chance to resume regular meetings between Moldova and Transdniester leaders. I hoped these talks would be constructive in line with the joint declaration, stressing the need to speed up the drafting and signing of a document on the special status of the Transdniester region.

At first, Tiraspol did not object in principle to the scheduled meeting, however, later, it began to link it to a demand to lift the ban on bringing in new banknotes, Transdniester rubles, printed in Germany. But the National Bank, Moldova's sole emission center, disallowed that. As head of state, I fully agree that the Transdniester leaders ultimatum is against both the constitution and the earlier reached Chisinau-Tiraspol accords.

Our experts had done all they can to convince the Transdniester side that the January 31st meeting was essential. However, the Tiraspol leaders, sticking to their demands, had been intransigent again, and the meeting was disrupted.

Nonetheless, I still hope that through mediation, especially by the OSCE mission, we will compel Tiraspol to resume talks. The basis for that exists. Only the good will of Tiraspol is needed. As for Moldova's leadership, it is still prepared to hold constructive negotiations on territorial reintegration.

Q.: How do you assess the social and political climate?

A.: On the whole, it is calm. However, this visual calmness does not mean that politicians should look at what is going on with indifference, turning a blind eye to such outrages as wage and pension delays.

I have said time and again that the constitution obliges the parliamentary majority factions of the Agrarian-Democratic and Socialist Unity Parties to make the cabinet act in the right spirit. In some parts of the republic, teachers and workers of other budget sphere workers have been on strike, demanding pay. If their demands are ignored, the situation may get out of control.

At this background, it looks odd that some left-wing parties have hurriedly launched a presidential election campaign, even though the election ballot can take place at no sooner than the end of this year. For instance, the Socialist Party of Moldova has appealed to public and political organizations to set up a single electoral bloc in preparation for presidential elections.

I believe that in a situation when even the election date has not been fixed yet, say nothing of other preliminary procedures, such a rush cannot be regarded other than an attempt to distract the population from urgent social and economic issues.

One can expect the on-going session of parliament to affect the social and political climate in the republic. Hopefully, with all the polarity of their views, the factions will manage to examine constructively and responsibly my legislative initiatives on national language and on making land a commodity stock. Society is looking forward to parliamentary decisions on these issues, decisions which will be crucial to the domestic political climate.

Q.: If we take economic problems, what do you think stands in the way of more foreign investment in Moldova's industry and financial sphere?

A.: Moldova is strategically oriented at foreign economic ties, expecting more foreign investment in industry and finances.

Initial conditions have been created for attracting bigger foreign investment. The appropriately amended republican law on foreign investment, as foreign experts themselves admit, provide a favorable legislative basis for potential investors.

Moldova has already signed inter-governmental treaties and agreements with many countries and with more than 40 international organizations. The implementation of some investment programs, in particular in the processing industry, has yielded fruit.

Of course, there are a number of factors, creating obstacles to the effective use of foreign capital. This concerns above all the lack of a proper mechanism to apply the law especially to banking and finances. Other things that scare potential foreign investors is the incompetence of our personnel at all levels, red tape in state structures, and sometimes biased information on Moldova's potential abroad.

Once all these problems solved, the situation will get better. Big hopes in this respect are pinned on the National Agency for Foreign Investment Support, on the Agency for Restructuring Industrial Enterprises, and on the creation of a state investment bank, which, if foreign capital is invested it, will give a fresh impetus to this lucrative field of foreign economic cooperation.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Opposition Leaders Insist Ministers Resign

LD0202193596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1700 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, February 2 (Itar-Tass) — The leaders of anti-government armed groups in Tajikistan, headed by Ibod Boymatov, former Mayor of the Tajik city of Tursun-Zade and Makhmud Khudoyberdyev, Commander of the Tajik Defence Ministry's 1st Motorized Division stationed in Kurgan-Tyube, do not go to any compromises so far and insist that some Cabinet members should resign.

The demands were read out at a national parliament session on Friday by First Vice-Speaker Abdumadzhid Dostiyev, the leader of an MPs commission. Throughout the past 24 hours, the Commission, breaking up into two panels, engaged in negotiations with the mutineers.

According to Dostiyev, the Kurgan-Tyube group insists on the resignation of the local administration chief of Khatlong region and First Vice-Premier of Tajikistan Mahmadsaid Ubaydullayev and Defence Minister Sherali Khayrulloyev. The Tursun-Zade group insists on the resignation of First Vice-Premier and Chief of the Presidential Staff Izatullo Khayeyev. Economic demands have also been put forward.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov, in his remarks at the session, stated that the actions in Tursun-Zade and Kurgan-Tyube had been pre-planned and that a military coup had been prepared. He emphasised that all issues should be settled only within the framework of the Constitution and the current legislation.

"I am ready to meet the commanders of the groups at any place and at any time to settle issues peacefully," Rakhmanov said. "However, I shall not accept any conditions and I shall not make any decisions under pressure. Weapons should be handed in and the mutineers should surrender to the authorities". Should the mutineers voluntarily hand in arms, the authorities guarantee personal safety for them.

Rakhmanov criticised the Commission members who, he believes, have failed to accomplish the tasks assigned to them but limited themselves only to drawing up a protocol. Therefore, the talks should be continued.

Khudoyberdyev denied accusations, leveled at him by Rakhmanov, of a military coup attempt, ostensibly made for the sake of assuming a high office.

In an Itar-Tass telephone interview on Friday, Khudoyberdyev stated that demands for the resignation of a number of government leaders are backed not only by officers and men but also by former field commanders of the Popular Front and by thousands of civilians driven to despair by poverty.

"Neither my supporters nor myself seek power or any high offices. We just want to secure that incompetent people, who proved their inability to stabilise the socio-political and economic situation in the country, quit the government," Khudoyberdyyev said.

The Brigade Commander said his supporters had tried to voice their demands at peaceful meetings but that the meeting were dispersed and meeting organisers were arrested.

Khudoyberdyev is of the opinion that the peace process in Tajikistan and talks with opposition leaders proceed very languidly. No practical results have been achieved during the entire negotiating process. Therefore, he believes that field commanders from among his supporters should also participate in the inter-Tajik talks. If this is done, he said, the negotiating process will be completed within a week.

Friday's session of the Tajik parliament, where recent actions by the two anti-government opposition groups were discussed, brought no results.

On hearing the rebels' demands insisting on the resignation of some of the Cabinet members, Tajik MPs required being informed in greater detail about the situation in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursun-Zade.

Only after the power ministers visit the cities, will the rebel leaders adopt a final decision, according to Tajik parliamentarians.

Most MPs are inclines to a peaceful solution, in spite of some radical proposals that force should be used to settle the crisis. The law-makers will resume their session on Saturday.

According to earlier reports, the Tajik Foreign Ministry denounced the large-scale opposition offensive in Tajikistan which was launched as peace talks were underway in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat and called on the U.N. envoy in the republic to urge the opposition to stop the fighting.

"In conditions when a regular round of inter-Tajik talks on a peaceful and political settlement of the conflict is underway in Ashgabat and contrary to the reached agreement on a ceasefire and an end to other hostilities, the armed formations of irreconcilable opposition openly ignore the Tehran agreement of September 17, 1994," official spokesman Igor Sattarov told a briefing on Wednesday quoting a statement by the Foreign Ministry.

He said opposition militants opened fire on government troop positions near the village of Lairom in the Tavildara region on Thursday, and on Wednesday "the armed opposition unleashed major combat activities" there.

"There are killed and wounded in the units of the Defence Ministry of the Republic of Tajikistan," the spokesman said, but he did not elaborate.

"The leadership of the Republic of Tajikistan assesses the actions as a hostile provocative act which was staged not by chance during the negotiating process and is clearly aimed at its disruption and at the destabilisation of the aggravating situation in the country," the spokesman stressed.

He said the Foreign Ministry had sent a note to the head of the U.N. mission in Tajikistan, Darko Silovic, requesting him to give the necessary assessment of the activities of the militants and to "inform the leadership of the opposition about the developments for adopting urgent measures to avert violations of the temporary ceasefire regime."

The ministry also warned that all "unlawful activities in Tavildara region would be cut short by all available forces and means."

The situation around Kurgan-Tyube and Tursun-Zade remains tense. The leaders of the armed groups await Presidential and Parliament decisions.

The situation in Dushanbe is stable. Additional units of government forces are in control of the city. According to information from a number of independent sources, the sounds of gunshots were heard throughout the night from Thursday to Friday in some areas adjacent to the Tajik capital.

In another development, two airplanes of Russia's Emergencies Ministry arrived at Dushanbe on Friday. The planes brought 60 tonnes of humanitarian aid, largely foodstuffs. The aid was handed over to the Russian Embassy in Tajikistan to be distributed among ethnic Russian living in the republic.

Russian President's national security aide Yuri Baturin, who arrived in Dushanbe on Thursday, continues to familiarize himself with the military and political situation in Tajikistan.

Baturin has already met President Emomali Rakhmanov of Tajikistan and leaders of power-wielding ministries. The talks were held behind closed doors, however Itar-Tass learned that the sides discussed the situation at the Tajik-Afghan border, in the Tavildara region at the feet of the Pamir Mountains, where armed units of Tajik opposition on Wednesday launched a large-scale combat operation against the government forces, and the situation in the cities of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursun-Zade.

On Friday, Baturin also visited the 12th outpost of the Moskovskiy border detachment at the Tajik-Afghan border, where the situation is most complicated, and had talks with soldiers and officers.

In the meantime, President Rakhmanov reiterated his decision to meet the two mutinous leaders. However, Khudoyberdyev refused to meet the president citing the absence of personal security guarantees.

Boymatov said he was ready to meet Rakhmanov in the town of Gissar, not far away from Tursun-Zade.

Rakhmanov said that his decision was still in effect and that he would not accept any ultimatums and would adopt a decision only after the two rebel groups decommissioned their weapons.

"I am not a puppet in the hands of political forces. I want the conflict to be solved peacefully. However, there is law, there is the Constitution," he said.

Commenting on Khudoyberdyev and Boymatov's demands to grant amnesty to all participants in armed conflicts since 1992, including Popular Front field commanders, he said this problem would take time to be solved. It is impossible to amnesty all indiscriminately, including those who had committed murder, he said.

Rakhmanov appealed to the law-makers to be more responsible, since the fate of the Tajik nation was at stake. The burden of all responsibility cannot be shifted on the shoulders of the President, he said.

There are forces which have been trying to split up the nation. They have been heating tensions in an attempt to wipe Tajikistan off the map, he stressed.

Tajikistan: Baturin Urges Peaceful Settlement of Crisis

LD0302085096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0826 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, February 3 (Itar-Tass) — Presidential aide for issues of national security Yuriy Baturin, who has been staying in Dushanbe for three days, believes that the present crisis will be resolved by peaceful means. On Saturday, Baturin visited one of the units of the 201 motor-rifle regiment.

Commenting on the situation, Baturin said that the developments when internal forces were at loggerheads cannot be described otherwise than a mutiny, adding that he hoped that the crisis would be resolved peacefully.

Heads of the groups carrying on talks with armed formations in Tursun-Zade and Kurgan-Tyube will report to the Tajik parliament today about the progress of the talks.

On Saturday morning the situation in Dushanbe was calm and kept under control by the local authorities.

Tajikistan: Tension Rises in Dushanbe as Opposing Forces Gather

LD0302103196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0854 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dushanbe, 3 Feb — The session of Tajikistan's national parliament scheduled for this morning at which it was planned to discuss the results of the talks with the leaders of the rebel groupings in the towns of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzoda has been postponed until 1600 local time. Parliamentary Chairman Safarali Rajabov explained to deputies that the break in the session's work was caused by the fact that the members of the deputies' commission who held talks last night were not yet ready to give their reports.

Yuriy Baturin, the Russian president's national security aide, today visited one of the regiments of Russia's 201st motorized rifle division stationed in the city. When correspondents asked him for his assessment of the situation in Tajikistan, Baturin said he expected the situation to be resolved peacefully. [passage omitted]

According to independent sources, over the past 24 hours there has been a tendency toward a sharp aggravation of the situation in Dushanbe, itself. So-called self-defense units are being set up in a number of outlying housing districts. An armed grouping made up of former Kulyab field commanders has taken up position in the city's Frunze stadium. A unit of the border brigade of Tajikistan's Defense Ministry, which arrived with its armored equipment from the southern district of Kumsangir on 1-2 February is also here, for reasons unknown. There are up to 3,000 people at the stadium. Checkpoints on the approaches to Dushanbe and in the capital itself have been reinforced. The streets are empty and stores are closed. The population has received virtually no information from the official authorities about what is going on and is waiting nervously.

Meanwhile, the situation in the towns of Tursunzoda and Kurgan-Tyube, according to independent sources, remains, without any marked changes. The armed supporters of Colonel Mahmud Khudoberdiyev, commander of the 1st Brigade of the Tajik Defense Ministry and Ibod Boymatov, former mayor of the town of Tursunzoda and national parliament deputy, are not yet taking any actions although they have moved their checkpoints outside the towns of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzoda. One of rebel Colonel Khudoberdiyev's checkpoints has been set up on Fakhrabad pass about 30 km from Dushanbe. [passage omitted]

Tajikistan: Parliament Discusses Situation in Kurgan-Tyube

MK0302131996 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 3 Feb 96 p 3

[NEGA untitled report from Tajikistan]

[FBIS Translated Text] The session of the Tajik parliament continues to discuss the situation in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade. At present, supporters of Colonel Makhmud Khudoyberdyyev, commander of the 1st Brigade of the Tajik Defense Ministry, are controlling a 60-km automobile route leading to Kurgan-Tyube. The endmost posts of the rebels are at a distance of 40 km from Dushanbe, at the Fakharabad pass.

At the 2 February session, Abdulmajid Dostiyev, first deputy chairman of the Supreme Assembly, who chairs a special parliamentary commission set up on 1 February for the negotiations with the armed groups, informed the deputies about the rebels' demands. They insist that powers of central and local authorities be delimited, that First Deputy Premier Makhmadsaid Ubaydulloyev and Defense Minister Sherali Khayrullayev be dismissed, that the present Khatlon region (its administrative center is the city of Kurgan-Tyube) be divided into Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyab regions, like before 1993, and that their representatives take part in inter-Tajik negotiation. On 2 February, members of the commission left to resume negotiations.

Speaking at the session, Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov called the rebellion a military coup attempt and said that he was ready to meet with the leader of the armed groups any time and at any place, but he did not intend "to let himself be run by the rebels" and was going to act in accordance with the Constitution. On 2 February, Makhmud Khudoyberdyyev said that he would not compromise, but that he was also for the use of peaceful means to settle the conflict. According to Khudoyberdyyev, at present he is being supported by some 5,000 armed people, including officers' brigades and gunmen of the former People's Front.

Tajikistan: Russian Troops Placed on 'High Alert'

LD0302143596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1425 GMT 3 Feb 96

[By Mikhail Shevtsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 3 (Itar-Tass) — The situation around the units of the 201st Russian Motorised Infantry Division participating in a peacekeeping operation in Tajikistan is normal, but they have been put on high alert, a high-ranking Russian official said.

Colonel-General Vladimir Semenov, the commander of the Russian land forces, told Itar-Tass on Saturday that Russian troops do not take part in the intra-Tajik conflict and continue to carry out their mission.

Tajikistan: Baturin, Military Chief Visit Russian Peacekeepers

LD0302145196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, Feb 3 (Interfax) — President Yeltsin's security aide Yuriy Baturin and the deputy chief-of-staff of the Russian armed forces Colonel-General Vyacheslav Zherebtsov saw elements of Russia's 201st motorized rifle division practice combat cooperation and inspected the division's hardware. The 201st division is part of the peacekeeping contingent of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Tajikistan.

Baturin and Zherebtsov visited with a motorized rifle regiment headquartered on the outskirts of Dushanbe. They showed interest in the regiment's fighting spirit and saw helicopter and heavy armor drills.

"There is no direct link between the inspection and recent developments in Tajikistan," Baturin said. "Army units and their elements are learning combat cooperation, just like they did in the Far East where regular troops, border guards and other power structures were engaged in combat drills."

(Men who used to support Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov rebelled in the cities of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade. They demanded that a number of national leaders step down — IF note.)

Lieutenant-General Anatoliy Chechulin, who accompanied Baturin to Dushanbe, feels there is no connection between the rebels and the armed opposition forces concentrated on the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border. Chechulin commands the Far Eastern border guard district but used to command, till 1995, the Russian border guard contingent in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Assures 'Everywhere Is Peaceful'

LD0302201096 Dushanbe Radio Tajikistan Network in Tajik 1700 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Statement by Tajik President Rakhmanov in parliament 3 February recorded]

[Begin Rakhmanov recording in progress] ...do not believe the false rumors. Everywhere is peaceful. In the Tavildara District some opposition forces are taking advantage of these internal incidents and started this but there are also forces which are protecting those places and which can stop them. There is no cause for fear. The people are calmly [words indistinct]. There are forces which, particularly today, desperately want to start plundering and stealing. This should not happen. I have instructed one of the [word indistinct] forces and local administration bodies to go there and to [words indistinct] in the city of Dushanbe and other places. All my aim and my primary aim from the 16th session, and I will repeat this, has been to resolve the issue by peaceful means and not through force. This remains. I am fully confident that we, together with you, will achieve this. No foreign enemy and no unfortunate internal force will be able to make us fight one another. I fully believe in this and I request that you believe in this. [end recording]

Tajikistan: Government-Opposition Clashes Continue in Tavil-Dara

LD0402094996 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0900 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Contradictory reports are coming from Tajikistan where armed rebels are in control of the towns of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzoda. Talks between representatives of the Tajik parliament and rebel leaders took place yesterday. However, the results have not been made public. Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov said that the CIS peacekeeping delegations have joined the negotiation process.

Meanwhile, clashes are going on between the Tajik Government troops and the armed detachments of the opposition in Tavil-Dara district. Over the past four days, four government troops have been killed and 12 wounded.

Tajikistan: Opposition Leader Sends Letter to UN

LD0402131396 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0600 GMT 4 Feb 96

["Text" of letter by Sayed Abdullo Nuri, leader of the Islamic Movement and United Opposition Forces of Tajikistan, to Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, UN secretary general's special envoy, and representatives of the observer countries on 27 January — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God: Esteemed Ambassador Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, esteemed representatives of the observer countries, and respected compatriots, via this letter I assume the responsibility of declaring invalid the documents and statement signed by [Tajik President] Emomali Rakhmanov and me, which have been interpreted with speculation and credulity.

The statement refers to consultations for a congress of Tajikistan's peoples. The delegation of the United Opposition Forces of Tajikistan has taken into account the wishes of Presidents Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan, Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, and Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan on holding this sort of congress; the exchange of views between Rakhmanov and me on this subject; our joint amendments proposed at the negotiations; and the wide participation of delegates from the two sides under the leadership of the United Nations.

The statements and proposals of the government negotiating delegation show that they consider convening consultations on the congress will be a guarantee of peace and calm. The participation of the United Opposition Forces in the political life of Tajikistan is limited to the scope of this congress's rules. Having the aforementioned plan, the leadership of the Republic is refusing to establish a National Reconciliation Council and a transitional government. They claim that these proposals are against the Constitution of the state. The approval of the Constitution and the presidential and parliamentary elections were carried out contrary to agreements on the agenda of the talks and international law, because more than 700,000 refugees from Tajikistan did not take part in the elections. They amounted to about half the residents of the Republic who had the right to vote. For this reason, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe refused to participate in the elections as observers. The aforementioned institutions expressed their concerns and disagreement through documents released on the trends in the political situation in the Republic.

For these reasons, the government's saying that it will solve political issues within the framework of the Constitution is leading the talks to deadlock. Observing their activity, one cannot detect any inclination toward peace and calm. They have definite goals that they want to achieve by continuing the talks, and they are keen to present themselves as supporters of peace and calm. By making promises to the people, they will take time to strengthen the regime's structures. This is a real sin and will of course be exposed.

The country is left in poverty. Wise forces will leave the homeland. Long holidays — resulting from the instability, which will cause illiteracy among students at schools, vocational colleges, and universities — are leading the country into danger. All the people of the country, including the leadership of the state, are not protected from the threat of criminals, because the present leadership came to power thanks to those criminal groups. Regionalism, which has developed into extremism; endless temptations; and localism, which has almost been enshrined in law, are entering more and more into the social and political life of Tajikistan. The regime's international policy is based on the following principle: Anybody who gives you something is a friend and anybody who does not give anything is an enemy. They are separating Tajikistan and themselves from others. If this situation continues, Tajikistan will lose its independence and authority.

The problem has become very complicated, and Boris Yeltsin's forced statement, where he said he cannot be responsible for Tajikistan, bears witness to this fact. It is very painful and shameful for us, the people of Tajikistan, to hear these words. If the president of the Russian Republic were aware of the current conditions of Tajikistan, including the current conditions of the Russian-speaking residents of the Republic, he would of course be horrified. Out of the Russian community of half a million, only several thousand Russians have remained in Rakhmanov's state and are living in very difficult conditions. We are interested in the destiny of all the people of Tajikistan. We are sorry for everyone who has had to leave his homeland. That is why the opposition is making efforts to resolve political issues first.

I declare that the granting of permission to re-register banned parties and organizations and the annulment of criminal cases brought against the opposition lost their significance long ago, because these issues should have been resolved before the Constitution was approved and the presidential and parliamentary elections were held in the Republic.

The events in Tursunzade and Kurgan-Tyube could be a reason for establishing the National Reconciliation Council and will be viewed as rescuing Tajikistan from the military and political regime. The interests of all ethnic societies, parties, and political organizations in all areas of Tajikistan will be taken into account in this council.

Delaying these matters will aggravate the situation and give rise to dangerous events. The opposition's views on this subject have been put forward at the talks, and of course we are willing to reach agreements, but we are not going to give up our main proposals, which embody the hopes and wishes of our people. Those who want to sow the seed of disagreement among us and want us to be ruled by others will be greatly mistaken. We will not allow them to do this.

Presently, some points have arisen in the talks, and the country's future will depend on their results. We ask God to grant grace to us all.

[Signed] With respect, Sayed Abdullo Nuri, leader of the United Opposition Forces of Tajikistan.
[Dated] 27 January 1996.

Tajikistan: Clashes Reported Outside Capital; 'Unease' in Dushanbe

LD0402134396 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0600 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Analysts say that the situation in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade is calm, but the leaders of the regime and the Supreme Council deputies are living in the capital of Tajikistan in a state of unease and disorder. Paramilitaries loyal to President Emomali Rakhmanov's regime have left their positions in the southern part of the country and have come to the capital. They are waiting for an order from the president of the regime and the Supreme Council to wipe out their former comrades-in-arms from the Popular Front.

The paramilitary militants and Mahmadsaid Ubaydullayev, their spiritual leader and deputy prime minister, have asked for permission from the Supreme Council to carry out military operations. According to him, Mahmud Khudoyberdiyev's and Ibod Boymatov's supporters amount to 300 people, and if permission is given Ubaydulloyev will be able to wipe out the two groups in one hour.

The paramilitaries loyal to the regime number 3,000 and have gathered in the capital's central stadium. All four sides of Dushanbe are surrounded and are being strongly defended by the paramilitaries loyal to the regime, who are fearing an assault by the Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade groups.

Streets in the city, which used to be crowded, are empty; shops are closed; and all the residents of the city are waiting for the outcome of these events.

According to experts, the groups of 1st Brigade commander Mahmud Khudoyberdiyev and Ibodullo Boymatov will not give up their demands, and, thus, the regime's loyal paramilitaries will enter the arena ready for action.

Serious clashes took place between Rakhmanov's loyal groups and the groups opposing him in the (Chim-Teppa) locality in Leninskiy district on 3 February. Reports indicate that these clashes continued all night and that as a result, one person was killed and seven were injured. Head of the regime Rakhmanov had sworn an oath to solve the problem by peaceful means a day before this event, but his loyal men are adhering to the slogan: We came with blood and we will go with blood. They are shedding the people's blood.

Tajikistan: President Amnesties Rebels Who Surrender Arms

LD0402165496 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 4 Feb 96

[From the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received the latest information about what is happening in Tajikistan. President Rakhmanov has decreed that the rebels who took part in the military revolt in the towns of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursun-Zade should be amnestied. At the same time, it is said that the amnesty will apply only to those who surrender their weapons. The decree will come into force and will be implemented only on this condition and on the condition that disarmament begins from 4 February. Incidentally, judging from this report, the authorities have already stated that the conflict has been resolved by peaceful means. Evidently, it will come to light soon whether this is the case or not.

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Blames 'External Forces'

LD0402170996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1605 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, Feb 4 (Interfax) - External forces seeking to turn Tajikistan into a Moslem state are to blame for the present aggravation of the situation in the republic, Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov told a parliamentary session in Dushanbe Sunday.

"This will not happen, we will not let it happen," he stated.

Tajik deputies and CIS peacekeepers in Tajikistan held talks with rebels in the cities Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade all day long Sunday, but their results are still unknown.

Prior to this, the Tajik authorities promised not to persecute the supporters of the rebel leaders, Makhmud Khudoyberdiyev and Ibodullo Boymatov, who had risen in arms on January 26, demanding drastic government reshuffles.

Tajikistan: Compromise Between Government, Rebels

LD0402182396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1645 GMT 4 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dushanbe, 4 Feb — Talks with the Tajik military rebels ended today with a compromise.

On the insistence of the rebel servicemen in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade, the authorities agreed to fire three top officials. In their turn, the rebels agreed to withdrew their demands of dismissal of the defense minister, Sherali Khayrulloyev, and to return to their barracks. Their armed supporters will also surrender arms and armed vehicles to the authorities. [passage omitted]

The rebels' demands on the amnesty for the participants in the confrontation between the two brigades of the government troops in Kurgan-Tyube in September last year and for those taking part in the latest mutiny were also met. This excludes individuals who committed a crime before or after these events. The parliament of the republic has adopted a special resolution to this effect.

The rebels also demanded release of the members of the former National Front, a paramilitary organization which helped the present leadership to come to power in December 1992. By a decision of the parliament, a special commission has been set up to review the cases of the organization members sentenced by the court.

Earlier, the rebels demanded the separation of the Khatlon Region into Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyab Regions which were amalgamated three years ago.

According to the agreement, the first motor rifle brigade of Lieutenant-Colonel Mahmud Khudoyberdoyev should leave Kurgan-Tyube and return to the site of permanent deployment.

Tajikistan: Defense Minister Says Army Can Repulse Rebels

LD0402224996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1416 GMT 4 Feb 96

[By unidentified ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dushanbe, 4 Feb — Taking advantage of the confrontation in Tursunzade and Kurgan-Tyube, armed detachments of the opposition have started a major offensive in Tavil-Darinskiy District in the Amur foothills with the aim of consolidating their positions there. This was stated in parliament today by Tajik Defense Minister Sherali Khayrulloyev, reporting to deputies on the military-political situation in the country. In the minister's opinion, the events in the mountainous region have affected the second round of inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabat.

The minister highlighted three currents within the opposition — the armed irreconcilable Islamic opposition, the moderate pro-Islamic, and finally the democratic opposition. All of them, Khayrulloyev believes, are coordinating their activity and have links with foreign countries, especially Afghanistan.

The opposition movement, the head of the war department continued, have their major bases in Dushanbe and Garm, and in Vakhshskiy, Pyandzhskiy, and Kumsangirskiy Districts of Khatlon Region in the Vakhsh valley. They number 3,500 men. For training fighters of the armed opposition, bases in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are used.

The aim of the latest offensive in Tavil-Darinskiy District is to create a bridgehead for forming an Islamic republic here. During the latest fighting in the Amur foothills, Khayrulloyev said, four soldiers of the Defense Ministry were killed and 19 wounded, and the number of captives is being clarified.

The minister thinks the main reasons for the aggravation of the situation in the republic is the population's dissatisfaction with the government's policy, the difficult socioeconomic situation of the inhabitants, and the inter-Tajik conflict. Taking all these difficulties into consideration, along with the mood of the population, the opposition delegation in Ashgabat is trying by means of pressure to legalize its presence within the republic, and force its leadership to agree to their conditions for creating a new government in Tajikistan.

The minister also said that his department is encountering difficulties in selecting staff. This is the result of insufficient funding and there being no professional army officers.

But in spite of this, said Khayrulloyev, we have sufficient forces and means to destroy the opposition's's formations in the Tavil-Dara District and to control the situation in the country. He said that a special 2,500-strong mountain motor-rifle brigade was being formed. Military actions had been temporarily stopped in the Tavil-Dara District because of the bad weather and the snowfalls, but when the weather improved the government forces intended to recapture the positions they had surrendered, the minister said.

When Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov spoke afterward to the deputies he again accused "external forces" of trying to destabilize the situation in the republic and to turn it into an Islamic state. He noted that external forces were involved in the Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade events. The Tajik leadership had facts that were evidence of the negative actions of individual representatives of international bodies. Rakhmanov said that he had invited UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali to Dushanbe in this connection.

The president reported that the talks in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade had been continued until this morning. At present the dialogue in Kurgan-Tyube has been resumed. Rakhmanov considers that the talks should be concluded today, and there is every reason to hope that their result will be positive.

It is anticipated that today the parliament will hear information from the government delegation that has left for talks in Kurgan-Tyube.

Tajikistan: President Issues Decrees Dismissing Officials

LD0502112196 Dushanbe Radio Tajikistan Network in Tajik 0500 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Decrees of the president of the Republic of Tajikistan:

Under Article 69 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, I decree that:

Mahmadsaid Ubaydullayev is relieved of the post of first deputy prime minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, in view of his resignation.

Under Article 69 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, I decree that:

Izatullo Khayeyev is relieved of the post of chief of staff of the president of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Under Article 69 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, I decree that:

Abdujalol Salimov is relieved of the post of chairman of Khatlon Region [southern Tajikistan].

Under Article 69 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, I decree that:

Abdulakhmad Salimovich Dostiyev [first deputy chairman of parliament] is appointed acting chairman of Khatlon Region.

[Signed] Emomali Rakhmanov, president of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 4 February 1996

Tajikistan: Interior Minister Claims Situation 'Under Control'

LD0502122296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1123 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, Feb 5 (Interfax) — The fulfillment of several key demands, put forward by rebel colonel Khudoberdyev, has helped to stabilize the situation in Tajikistan, Tajik Interior Minister Saydamir Zukhurov told Interfax Monday.

"The crisis in relations between the rebel military and the Dushanbe authorities is on the verge of a turning point," he said.

The minister refuted reports claiming an aggravated situation in the Tajik capital of Dushanbe. The law-enforcement bodies have the situation under control, he said.

"City life is normal, shops are open, public transportation is functioning, and people are working," said the official.

President Emomali Rakhmanov yielded last Sunday to the demands of rebels in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade, and dismissed Deputy Prime Minister Makhmadsaid Ubaidullayev who was in charge of "power" departments, head of presidential staff Izatullo Khayeyev, and head of the Khatlon regional administration Abdulzhalol Salimov.

These were the demands of Col. Makhmud Khudoberdyev, commander of the Tajik Defense Ministry's 1st brigade in Kurgan-Tyube, 80 kilometers south of Dushanbe, and ex-mayor Boimatov of Tursunzade, 60 kilometers west of Dushanbe.

"It was a forced concession," said the minister. "The president dismissed these officials only for political reasons, as the country faced a real threat of a civil war. Tajikistan will not survive a new conflict."

In his opinion, Boimatov's group will start to disarm in the next two days.

A parliament commission is continuing to negotiate with Col. Khudoberdyev, said the minister. The colonel said that if his demands are satisfied, he is ready to move his units to Tavil-Dara, where armed clashes between government troops and units of the irreconcilable Islamic opposition are underway.

Tajik Defense Minister Sherali Khairullayev left for Kurgan-Tyube Monday, said the minister. He will meet the rebel colonel to discuss movement of his units to Tavil-Dara. The units are expected to help the government troops against the Islamic opposition militants.

Armenia

Armenia: Karabakh 'President' Meets UN Official in New York

NC0302214196 Yerevan ARAGIL ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN in English 1517 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan ("AZG" daily), 02/03/96—RMK [Republic of Mountainous Karabakh] President Robert Kocharyan met the envoy of UN Secretary General Aldo Ayelo in the Armenian Mission of the United Nations in New York on 1 February, and discussed the results of negotiations for resolution of the Karabakh conflict, held within the framework of OSCE Minsk group.

RMK Foreign Minister Arkadi Ghukasyan, and RMK representative to Armenia Alexan Harutyunyan participated in the meeting. (ROA [Repulic of Armenia] Representative to the United Nations Alexander Arzumanyan was on the way from Yerevan to New York by that time).

Robert Kocharyan held a press conference for the journalists in the building of UN Headquarters in New York yesterday. He left for Detroit in the night, to award a special medal to famous Armenian benevolent Alec Manoukyan. The delegation will leave for Chicago today, to meet the senators with pro-Armenian position.

Armenia: Karabakh 'Parliament Chairman' Meets Communist Leader

NC0302193896 Yerevan SNARK in English 1239 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Stepanakert, February 3. (SNARK)—Sergey Badalyan, First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party and Deputy of National Assembly arrived in Stepanakert and was received today by Karen Baburyan, Chairman of the NKR [Nagorno-Karabakh Republic] Parliament. NKR President's Press Secretary, Alexander Grigoryan, informed SNARK that a wide range of issues related to a peace resolution to the Karabakh conflict, the political situation in the region and the results of the latest elections to the Russian Duma were touched upon.

Badalyan was interested in the views of NKR leader concerning the measures taken by OSCE Minsk group and Russia aimed at activating the peacekeeping process. He stressed contacts between the Armenian Communist Party and NKR leaders are necessary while seeking for a fair resolution to the Karabakh problem. According to him, the right of nations to self-determination should be regarded as the main principle.

Baburyan in turn noted the NKR leaders are ready to cooperate with all political parties of Armenia including the Communist Party in order to protect the interests of the Armenian people and the future of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Iranian Envoy Warns of U.S. 'Anti-Iran Propaganda'

NC0302200896 Baku TURAN in English 1320 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/03.02.96/(TURAN)—Yesterday there was a party devoted to the second anniversary "Ten days Dakhei fajr - Shafag" victory of the Iranian Islam revolution. The party was organised by the Iranian Ambassador.

The Ambassador of Iran Alirza Bigdeli expressed a hope that the Azeri journalists will study more attentively the American-Irani relations. According to Bigdeli, the position of the Azerbaijan journalism in this question is not quite clear yet.

He said that recently the US allocated 20 million dollars for carrying out anti-Iran propaganda. According to Bigdeli "the U.S. try to find supporters in fight against Iran."

In his appeal to journalists he told about necessity of publication in the press the articles devoted to present situation in the American-Iranian relations. At the same time the Ambassador said that nobody can prevent the development of the Azeri-Iranian relations. In this respect, the role of the press is very great, Bigdeli said.

Azerbaijan: Aliyev Cites Need for Strong Army

LD0202213996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2023 GMT 2 Feb 96

[By Sevindzh Abdullayeva and Viktor Shulman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, February 2 (Itar-Tass) — Azerbaijan wants a peaceful solution to the conflict with its breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, but is set to regain all areas which the enclave seized, Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev said addressing a youth conference on Friday.

He cited as Azerbaijan's crucial need to strengthen its defence by setting up a combat effective army.

Azerbaijan was slow to create its army, starting real efforts to form it only in November of 1993, he continued.

Azerbaijan will use all its resources to regain its territorial integrity unless Nagorno-Karabakh returns the areas which it seized, Aliyev said.

He added that Azerbaijan needs a strong army to improve its defence, not to restart hostilities with Nagorno-Karabakh.

He voiced regret that the huge military potential left to Azerbaijan after the breakup of the Soviet Union had been squandered away or used by political groups in their fight for power. This accounts for Azerbaijan's defeats in the war with Nagorno-Karabakh, Aliyev said.

He told the conference that the training for military service is a key task of youth organisations.

All the property of Azerbaijan's defunct Komsomol, or the Young Communist League, will be turned over to the sport and youth affairs ministry, Alieyv promised.

Georgia

Georgia: Nationalists Condemn Ratification of Russia-Georgia Treaty

LD0302132796 Tbilisi BGI in Russian 1610 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [No dateline as received] — An extraordinary meeting was held today [2 February] by representatives of the political associations of the Georgian national liberation movement. Correspondent Viktoriya Kavzharadze reports:

[Kavzharadze] The meeting was dedicated to the Georgian Parliament's ratification of the treaty on friendship, good neighborly relations, and cooperation with Russia.

The meeting was opened by Irakli Tsereteli, the leader of the Georgian Party of National Independence. [passage omitted] Then speeches followed.

Vakhtang Bochorishvili [close associate of the former president Zviad Gamsakhurdia, former health minister]: If Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his spiritual brother Merab Kostava [a late leader of the national movement] were with us, all problems could be easily settled. Their will has not been implemented. The people do not want to fight for independence. They all think only of the fact that they have no water and no electricity. Meanwhile, we have lost Samachablo [South Ossetia] and Abkhazia. The ratified treaty with Russia will bring disaster to Georgia.

Nodar Natadze [the leader of Georgia's Popular Front, the chairman of the United Republican Party]: The communist era continues in Georgia. Eduard Shevardnadze does everything that Russia dictates to him. He has invited Russian peacekeeping forces to Abkhazia and is conducting a worthless policy in Ossetia. The development of the economy is hindered by the mafia, the bosses of which are among the top officials of the authorities. Privatization is a legalized form of the mafia. Shevardnadze has held falsified elections, has incited anti-national sentiments on Georgian TV, has used the Mkhedrioni to intimidate the population, and wants to hand over Poti port to Russia. Only national forces are able to save the country. However, we have to come to power through elections rather than forcibly.

Then, Konstantine Kukulashvili read a resolution:

1. Georgia has to quit the CIS.

2. The ratification of the Russian-Georgian treaty should be declared illegal.

3. The mandate of the Russian peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia should be annulled.

4. Efforts should be made to implement the 1 July 1993 resolution on the withdrawal of the Russian Army from Georgian territory.

The meeting adopted an appeal of the national forces to the world community to support the Georgian national liberation movement.

Georgia: Zhvania Says Georgia May Leave CIS Interparliamentary Assembly

LD0302144696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, Feb 3 (Interfax) — Georgia doubts that it will continue to be part of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, Georgian Parliamentary Chairman Zurab Zhvania said in a message to Russian State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev, according to the Georgian parliament's press service.

Zhvania said he was concerned about the holding of the press conference by Chairman of the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs Georgiy Tikhonov and leader of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia Vladislav Ardzinba. The press conference was held at the State Duma. (Abkhazia is Georgia's separatist republic — IF).

Zhvania said such actions could not be considered as an initiative of one State Duma deputy but were seen as a position of the entire State Duma, the Georgian parliament's press service told Interfax.

Georgia: Zhvania Urges Russia To Stop 'Promoting Abkhaz Separatism'

LD0302175996 Tbilisi First Program Television Network in Georgian 1600 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As you know, on the initiative of deputy Georgiy Tikhonov, Vladislav Ardzinba held a news conference at the Russian State Duma on 31 January. In this connection, Zurab Zhvania, the chairman of the Georgian Supreme Council, has made the following statement for the media:

[Begin Zhvania recording] As chairman of the Georgian Supreme Council, I would like to remind everyone, representatives of every party or any other force in Russia, that people and forces who are still promoting Abkhaz separatism are therefore snubbing the whole of Georgia and are effectively contributing to the isolation of Georgia as a single state from Russia. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Georgia: Pro-Georgian Abkhazians Warn Against Outside Inteference

LD0202141196 Tbilisi CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY in Georgian 1215 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi [no date as received] — The [pro- Georgian] Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia has made a statement. It says: The Abkhaz separatist leader Vladislav Ardzinba is currently in Moscow, enjoying the support and help of Georgiy Tikhonov, the chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee for CIS Affairs, and other Duma deputies. Their aim is to discredit the 19 January CIS summit, which had adopted a decision on the economic and political isolation of the Abkhaz criminal regime. An evidence of this is a news conference held in the State Duma on 31 January. Ardzinba and his like-minded followers supported the necessity of restoring the USSR, as well as Abkhazia joining Russia.

The statement by the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia condemns destructive actions of the irresponsible politicians who are interfering in Georgia's internal affairs. The statement warns the Russian leadership, President Yeltsin, about an impending danger.

The document stresses that the separatism, which has roots in Abkhazia, spread in Chechnya and there is a danger that it will find a following in other peoples. Certain deputies of the State Duma facilitate this — they have deviated from the reality and support the Abkhaz separatism.

Georgia: Abkhazia Protests Interference in 'Internal Affairs'

LD0202220096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1936 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SUKHUMI, Feb 2 (Interfax) — The Abkhaz government issued a statement Friday [2 February] strongly protesting against Georgia's interference in Abkhaz internal affairs.

According to the statement, the decree on the closure of Abkhaz sea ports, issued by Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze on January 31, contradicts international humanitarian law.

This measure by the Georgian authorities is aimed at restoring the territorial integrity of Georgia, disregarding the interests of an entire people and condemning the Abkhaz population to starvation, reads the statement.

Under the decree, humanitarian cargoes can be brought to Abkhazia only with the authorization of the Georgian government.

The Abkhaz government believes the measure will undermine the earlier agreements and will lead to a renewal of the armed conflict.

"Proceeding from the April 4, 1994, statement on the political settlement of the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia, any Tbilisi decrees on Abkhazia are illegal, null and void," reads the statement. The Abkhaz side believes that the 1994 document envisages equal relations between Georgia and Abkhazia.

Georgia: Abkhaz Separatists Building Fortifications on Gali Canal

LD0202194696 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1600 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 2 Feb — An IBERIA correspondent has been told at the Georgian Ministry of State Security that fortifications are being built at full tilt along the Gali canal in accordance with an order by Sultan Sosnaliyev, the so-called Abkhaz defense minister [name and title as received]. Abkhaz militants are preparing defense works in order that any attack by Georgian troops might be repelled if need be.

It may be recalled that the Gali canal is 12 kilometers west of the Inguri River and this area is at present controlled by Russian peacekeeping forces.

Latvia

Latvia: Russian Shift on NATO Expansion Noted

LD0202160296 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1400 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Maris Riekstins, secretary of state at the Foreign Ministry, returned to Latvia from Moscow. In his talks with Russian Foreign Minister [as heard] Sergey Krylov, there was discussion of the possible expansion of NATO. It transpired that Russia showed a new attitude to this issue. Maris Riekstins says this:

[Begin Riekstins recording] Russia still regards the NATO expansion in itself as remaining very [word indistinct], but my personal opinion is that Russian diplomats, compared with the last time we met, have become in their positions perhaps more definite, more precise in their formulations. There are not two interpretations, let us say, to the formulations. I do not know, and I cannot find out, whether this may have something to do with the new foreign minister — that is possible, too. Anyway, I saw precise positions and we can reckon with them.

It is difficult, though, for me to say how Russia will (?behave) if this process takes place, as we understand this process will not happen this year, and maybe not even next year. I think that at present Russia has not worked out mechanisms, though they would like to. I do not think, in any case, that we could reckon with them imposing any economic sanctions or the like. That is not [words indistinct] for Russia to (?oppose) its neighbors.

[Words indistinct], as you see the way in which these countries at present want to approach NATO and want to create security for their countries, as a way to guarantee security. We have previously heard, in fact, offers of so-called (?secret) guarantees. We know that both the NATO and Russia are striving to guarantee each country's security. We have previously expressed our position too, which does not change, that we do not accept such (?secret) guarantees. But there is a new nuance in Russia's position, in that they are also offering the possibility of it being unilateral: unilateral NATO guarantees, but with the condition that the alliance in itself is not extended. [end recording]

Lithuania

Lithuania: Ambassador Requests Consultations With NATO

LD0102131896 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1000 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dalius Cekuolis, the Lithuanian ambassador for relations with NATO, handed a letter to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana on Wednesday. The letter says that Lithuania is interested in taking part in political consultations with NATO.

Cekuolis signed an agreement between NATO and the participants of the Partnership for Peace program on the status of military forces. The agreement outlines the legal status for the presence of armed forces of NATO countries and Partnership for Peace member states on the territory of other countries during the events of the Partnership for Peace program.

NATO officials have also been presented with a draft program, prepared by the Lithuanian experts, for Lithuania's individual partnership with NATO for the period from 1996 to 1998. In addition, an assessment of the last year's individual partnership and an assessment of the Partnership for Peace planning and review process have been handed to NATO officials. It is expected that the program for Lithuania's individual partnership program for the coming two years will be approved before the meeting of the foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, which is to take place in May.

Lithuania: Brazauskas Views Elections, Slezevicius

LD0302145496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1339 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VILNIUS, Feb 3 (INTERFAX) — Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas said in an interview with Lithuania's Republic national paper Saturday that he might announce a date of parliamentary elections "in a week or two."

Under the Lithuanian Constitution, the next parliamentary elections are to be held in September or October 1996. However, the banking crisis which hit the country in late December 1995 and then developed into a governmental crisis has allowed the opposition to insist that early parliamentary elections be held not later than in May or June 1996. The Lithuanian parliament will vote on resignation of Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius Thursday.

The constitution stipulates that the president can declare early elections if parliament fails to decide on a program introduced by the new government within a 30-day's deadline or twice fails to approve the government-proposed program within a 60-day's deadline.

INTERFAX asked a representative of the Lithuanian parliament's leadership whether the president could declare early parliamentary elections for other reasons. The source said that Brazauskas was likely to set a date of regular elections which will be held in the time period determined by the constitution rather than early elections. The announcement of a date of the elections will help appease those favoring early parliamentary polls, the same source said.

Brazauskas confirmed that he had already selected a candidate for the prime minister in the event of parliament supporting Slezevicius's resignation. However, Brazauskas declined to disclose his candidate's name.

If parliament decides that Slezevicius can lead the government, this will not be a tragedy and the present prime minister will continue to work in that capacity, Brazauskas said.

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Its contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

FBIS collects, translates, disseminates, and analyzes foreign open-source information on behalf of the U.S. Government. Its publications may contain copyrighted material. ***Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.***

- Bracketed indicators before the first sentence of each item describe the way in which the material was processed by FBIS.
- Headlines and all bracketed explanatory notes are supplied by FBIS.
- Personal and place names are rendered in accordance with the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as adapted by FBIS. Unverified names in radio and television material appear in parentheses and are spelled phonetically; words and phrases in parentheses preceded by a question mark are unclear in the original and deduced from context.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

U.S. Government Customers

For a list of FBIS products, to subscribe to an FBIS publication, or to indicate a change of address contact:

FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, DC 20013-2604
Telephone: (202) 338-6735
FAX: (703) 733-6042

Non-Government Customers

Subscriptions are available from the National Technical Information Service:

NTIS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Telephone: (703) 487-4630
FAX: (703) 321-8547

New subscribers should expect a 30-day delay in receipt of the first issue.